



The Marker Lamp



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EDITOR
RILEY TRIGGS
512.636.3521
rileytriggs@gmail.com

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
GERT "SPEED" MULLER
lsrtreasurer@huntatroph.com

ADVERTISING
GERT "SPEED" MULLER
lsrtreasurer@huntatroph.com

Visit the LSR's web page at:
www.lonestarregion.com

The editorial policy of The Marker Lamp, the official publication of The Lone Star Region, shall be to contribute, wherever possible, to the promotion, growth and understanding of the hobby of Model Railroading, within the confines of good taste and responsibility. The Marker Lamp is published once each quarter by and for the members of The Lone Star Region of The National Model Railroad Association. Articles appearing in The Marker Lamp are the opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position or policies of the officers or membership of The Lone Star Region or The National Model Railroad Association.

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Kansas City Union Terminal
by Ken Kaiser

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Lone Star Region Call Board

LSR Officers

PRESIDENT
CHUCK LIND, MMR
3680 CR 324
Navasota, Texas 77868
(979) 219-3305
Chucklind46@gmail.com

BOARD ADVISOR
STEVE BARKLEY, MMR
2060 Belvedere Drive
Beaumont, Texas 77706
(210) 653-5947
baylormax@aol.com

VICE-PRESIDENT
RAY BYER
713-472-4599
raybyer@yahoo.com

TREASURER
GERT "SPEED" MULLER
lsrtreasurer@huntatroph.com

SECRETARY
JEFF PALMER
2806 High Plateau Dr.
Garland, Texas 75044
(972) 495-2097
res06wqv@gte.net

SECRETARY-EMERITUS
EUNICE LINDA
3028 Cumberland
Waco, Texas 76707-1219
(254) 754-5535
jilinda@hotmail.com

LSR Directors-At-Large

DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE
BLAKE BOGS
8202 Pine Thistle Ln.
Spring, TX 77379
713-254-7447
superchief1520@gmail.com

DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE
MARC LACHEY
2218 Blackberry Dr.
Richardson, TX 75082
214-507-7779
bu1977@att.net

DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE
RILEY TRIGGS
1005 Azie Morton Rd
Austin, Texas 78704
(512) 636-3521
rileytriggs@gmail.com

LSR Division Directors

(1) COWCATCHER DIVISION
MIKE MACKEY
1633 Parkside Trail
Lewisville, Texas 75077
214-460-1329
director@cowcatcherdivision.org

(4) CEN-TEX DIVISION
PETER KAZMIR
2022 Foothills
Leander, TX 78641-2376
(512) 259-6720
director@centexnmra.org

(7) DIVISION
DON P. KIMMELL
9132 Mansfield Road
Shreveport, Louisiana 71118
(318) 798-7718
elf4kcs@mac.com

(2) BAYOU DIVISION
KEN MASON
4340 COLORADO AVE
KENNER, LA 70065
504-722-6610
series9parts@cox.net

(5) DIVISION
DAVE LAMBERTS
3717 95th Street
Lubbock, Texas 79423-3811
(806) 792-7244
DavidWL1944@aol.com

(8) TEXAS GULF DIVISION
JIM LEMMOND
2821 Frostwood Circle
Dickinson, Texas 77539
281-534-6179
281-229-0845
jimlem@verizon.net

(3) TRINITY RIVER DIVISION
DONNA ORR
2625 Rolling Meadows Dr.
Rockwall, TX 75087
(972) 722-4769
dlo-rls@sbcglobal.net

(6) DIVISION
DON WINN
18026 Bishops Pond
San Antonio, TX 78257
(940) 391-0950
donswinn@gmail.com



LSR Chairs

ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM
DUANE RICHARDSON, MMR
1122 Holland Drive
Garland, TX 75040
(972) 495-6375
duane@purgatoryanddevilriver.com

CONVENTION
MARC LACHEY
2218 Blackberry Dr.
Richardson, TX 75082
214-507-7779
bu1977@att.net

EVENTS
BILL DRYDEN
202 Tallwood Drive
Georgetown, Texas 78628
(469) 964-8571
bdr149@airmail.net

MEMBERSHIP CO-CHAIRMAN
MIKE MACKEY
1700 Desperado Road
Fort Worth, TX 76131
214-460-1329
mikemackey_tx@sbcglobal.net

EDUCATION CHAIR
JOHN GARFIELD
2925 Plumb Street
Houston, Texas 77005
(713) 660-8820
Barnett6@sbcglobal.net

PUBLICATIONS- ML EDITOR
RILEY TRIGGS
1005 Azie Morton Rd
Austin, Texas 78704
(512) 636-3521
rileytriggs@gmail.com

HISTORIAN
BOB BARNETT
2925 Plumb Street
Houston, Texas 77005
(713) 660-8820
Barnett6@sbcglobal.net

WEB SITE-PUBLIC RELATIONS
JEFF PALMER
2806 High Plateau Dr.
Garland, Texas 75044
(972) 495-2097
res06wqv@gte.net

PARLIAMENTARIAN
RAY BYER
713-472-4599
raybyer@yahoo.com

YOUTH CHAIR
JIM LEMMOND
2821 Frostwood Circle
Dickinson, Texas 77539
281-534-6179
281-229-0845
jimlem@verizon.net

CONTEST CHAIR
JEFF PALMER
2806 High Plateau Dr.
Garland, Texas 75044
(972) 495-2097
res06wqv@gte.net

NOMINATIONS CHAIR
BLAKE BOGS
8202 Pine Thistle Ln.
Spring, TX 77379
713-254-7447
superchief1520@gmail.com

PHOTOGRAPHY CHAIR
DAVE LAMBERTS
3717 95th Street
Lubbock, Texas 79423-3811
(806) 792-7244
DavidWL1944@aol.com

NON-RAIL
VIRGINIA FREITAG
1835 Alta Vista
Houston, Texas 77023-2503
(713) 926-2993
v-freitag@comcast.net



President's Message

by Chuck Lind, MMR
Chucklind46@gmail.com

In talking recently with my daughter April, she stated that she had not ridden a train since she was about 5 and that since I ride trains all the time, she felt we should plan a train ride.

My daughter lives in Dalhart, Texas about as far north and west in the panhandle and still be in Texas. With that location, I decided a trip on the Durango and Silverton would be the best trip. The railroad doesn't run year around to Silverton due to snow and the possibility of avalanches, so the first trip over the complete line was to be on May 4th.

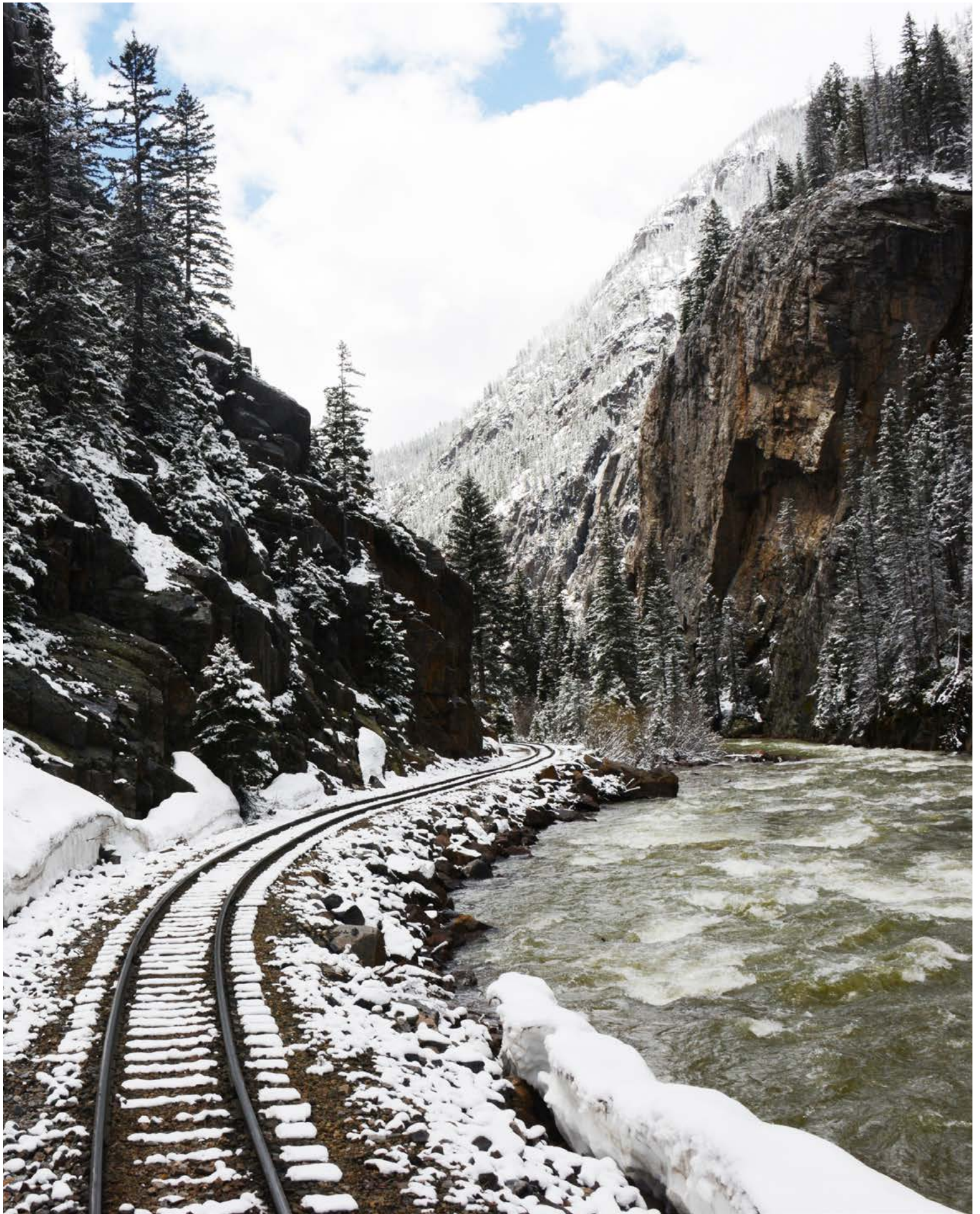
I couldn't get the seats I wanted until May 18th so tickets were purchased to ride in the Alamosa Parlor Car, which was built in 1881 and had the rear platform where I could take photos. We arrived in Durango on Friday, where we picked up the tickets and then with 3 women (wife, daughter, and granddaughter), headed out to do some shopping. Saturday we were on the 10 AM train, the temperature in Silverton was 30 degrees with chance of snow.

The trip was a cool, but beautiful day as we made our way to Silverton, enjoying the coffee and hot chocolate served by our host. She was a retired geologist and gave us a great talk about the area we were traveling. In Silverton we headed to the Bent Elbow for lunch (recommended by our host) and then the ladies headed out to do more shopping.

The LSR Convention is fast approaching and I hope to see many of you in Frisco.









Joy

by Riley Triggs

rileytriggs@gmail.com

ponyrr.blogspot.com

modelrailroaddesign.blogspot.com



Austin's [Tinplate Trackers](#) are perennial Austin Area Train Show favorites and a perfect way to get kids (and adults) excited about trains and model railroading. The large O scale display was set up in Taylor, Tx on May 4-5.

I'll admit it - I am a prototype modeler. I have fun in weird ways like deep researching, hunting down photos and information on eBay, ruminating over trivial details, hunching over schedules trying too hard to figure out how a railroad operated, not permanently affixing track in case I find a new map or aerial photo of that particular industry, pouring over inventory books, putting off building a model because I don't have the perfect angle photo, repainting perfectly good store-bought locomotives in a slightly darker shade of black, 3D modeling a box cab almost exactly like a 40 year old

MDC shell because the rivets don't quite match my railroad's builder picture, using railroad particular lingo in operation sessions on the radio, and many more very serious endeavors that I really enjoy in prototype modeling.

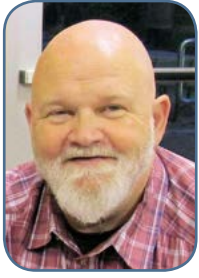
But sometimes it is wonderfully joyful to simply watch toy trains go around in circles a little too fast, with fun, rightly-colored paint schemes past slightly out-of-scale buildings with animated figures, lights and sounds.

You know, the fun stuff.

Riley



Up the Tracks Events Calendar



*By Bill Dryden
NMRA & LSR Life Member*

Here are upcoming events within the LSR of which I am aware. I will provide all the information YOU send me or I can glean from other publications, websites, etc., for these events. Additional information may be available through the NMRA Scale Rails and/or various trade magazines or various websites. Also, note that all show times and dates are at the discretion of the sponsoring organization and are subject to change. Please forward any and all information about upcoming events or activities in your area, club, etc., to me via e-mail at bdr149@airmail.net.

Lone Star Region 67th Annual Convention (2018)
Arriving Soon, the Austin Eagle, the 2018 NMRA Lone Star Region Convention!
June 13-17, 2018; Wingate by Windham Hotel and Conference Center; Round Rock, TX
More information at <https://austineagle.org/> or <http://www.lonestarregion.com/>
Come all!!!
PARTICIPATE!!!

RECURRING EVENTS AND MEETINGS

LSR Division 3 - Trinity River Division – Allen

The Trinity River Division meets on the Third Saturday of every month at the Christ Servant Lutheran Church, Allen Texas. Occasionally things change due to scheduling conflicts so pay close attention to the email meeting notices that go out a week before the meeting. If you would like to be added to the email list contact Donna Orr at donnalorrtx@gmail.com.

LSR Division 4 – Cen-Tex Division – Austin

The Cen-Tex Division meets bi-monthly at the Austin Northwest Recreational Center, 2913 Northland Drive, Austin, TX. Meetings are held at 10:00 am on the Second Saturday of the odd months and include clinics, show-and-tell, DCC minute, social activities and a layout open house. For more information about upcoming meetings, see <http://centexnmra.org> or contact director@centexnmra.org to be added to the mail list.

LSR Division 8 - Texas Gulf Division – Houston

The Texas Gulf Division presents hands-on-clinics every second Saturday of each month at the Bayland Center, 6400 Bissonnet, Houston. The clinic times are 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. All are welcome. To be added to the Division 8 mailing list contact Jim Lemmond at jimlem@comcast.net. The Division 8 web site is <http://texasgulfdivision.org/>

Alamo Model Railroad Engineers - San Antonio

The Alamo Model Railroad Engineers meets the 2nd Friday of the month at 7:30 p.m. in the Zucht Building at the Texas Transportation Museum, 11791 Wetmore Rd., San Antonio TX. For more information call Peter Shavney (210) 317-3661 or Gene Turner (210) 355-2777; or visit the web site www.alamomodelrailroadengineers.com.

Austin Model Railway Society - Austin

The Austin Model Railway Society is an HO scale modular group that is open to new members and meets once a month. For more information please email Riley Triggs at president@austinrailway.org or visit the web site www.austinrailway.org.

Houston Area Live Steamers

HALS has over 9,000 feet of track for you to enjoy and ride on most any Saturday of the year. Someone is usually there every Saturday with special run, operations, waybills/timetable, work and fun run days scheduled throughout the year. Our public run days are the third Saturday of the month March through November. Come see our 2,500 foot expansion in Phase 4. Model Railroaders (any scale) are welcome to attend most any time. Check our web site out at www.hals.org for schedule of events or e-mail Rick White – rick.white.jr@gmail.com for more information.

New Braunfels Railroad Museum

Kids Fun Day is held on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. New Braunfels Railroad Museum, 302 South San Antonio Street, in the 1907 Restored Railroad Depot; New Braunfels, TX. Museum phone (830) 627-2447. Kids of all ages will have the opportunity to run model trains and become a Jr. Engineer. Also among the displays at the Kids Fun Day will be a large US Army Model Garden (G) Scale and Lego Trains. Visit our Steam Engine, Caboose, Dining Car (available for Birthday Parties) and Box Car. There will be other fun, train related activities, additional model trains, train artifacts, our 1907 depot are on display. The Railroad Museum opens at 10:00 am on Saturdays. For field trip scheduling and more information, call Howard Young (210) 542-6121, or visit us at www.nbrm.org.

North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs – Irving

The North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs (NTC) meets the 3rd Tuesday of the month. Visit the website www.dftrainshows.com for more information about the NTC, its meeting site or member clubs.

Texas Northern Model Railroad Club – Plano

The Texas Northern Model Railroad Club business meeting is the 1st Thursday of the month and for regular meetings on Thursday evenings and most Saturdays. If you like to operate, come by on Tuesday nights to check on our progress in setting up operations. Located in Colin Creek Mall, Plano, TX, outside JC Penney's on the lower level. For more information: www.modelrailroadclub.org.

Texas Western Model Railroad Club – Forest Hills

The Texas Western Model Railroad Club meets for its business meeting every 1st Thursday of the month at 7:00 PM. The Club is located at 6808 Forest Hills Drive, Forest Hills, TX. For more information: (682) 587-2092 or www.twmrc.org or email cdo@twmrc.org.

EVENTS AND SHOWS

May

- 19th Train Show & Swap Meet – Lone Star Division, TCA. Sat. 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Admission: (not specified). Garden Ridge Community Center, 9500 John T. Phillips Parkway, Garden Ridge, TX. More information: Pat Halpin (210) 666-5607.
- 19th – 20th Historic Jefferson Train Show. Sat. 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Sun. 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Adult \$7, Kids under 6 Free. 223 W. Austin Street, Jefferson, TX. More information: Norman Bell (903) 240-6039, or <http://historicjeffersontrainshow.com/>.
- 25th – 26th 24 Hours @ Saginaw. (Sponsored by, North Texas Chapter, NRHS, Saginaw Chamber of Commerce and Choo Choo Express Trackless Trains). Fri. 7:00 p.m. to Sat. 7:00 p.m. Saginaw Heritage Center (the depot), 301 S. Saginaw Boulevard, Saginaw, TX. For more information, visit the event's Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/pg/24hoursatSaginaw/about/?ref=page_internal.

July

- 28th – 29th CLMRR Open House & Old Time Flea Market. Sat. 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Sun. 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Admission: Free. 3904 Vista Ridge Lane, Alvarado, TX. More information: Lee Martin (817) 666-5367.

September

- 8th North Texas Chapter Meet & Show. Sat. 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Adult \$6, Family \$9. Collin College Central Park Campus, Conference Center, 2200 West University Drive, McKinney, TX. More information: www.tca-northtexaschapter.org.
- 29th – 30th Dallas Area Annual Fall Train Show. (Sponsored by the North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs). Sat. 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Sun. 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Adult \$10, Kids under 12 w/ Adult Free, Scouts & Scout Leaders in uniform Free. Plano Civic Centre, 2000 E Spring Creek Parkway, Plano, TX. More information: www.dfttrainshows.com

October

- 6th Annual Cotton Belt Railroad Symposium. Sam Rayburn Student Center, Texas A&M Student Center, Commerce, TX. For more information: www.cottonbeltroute.com.
- 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th – 28th Pumpkin Patch Express – Texas State Railroad. Rusk, TX. More information: www.texasstaterailroad.net.
- 27th – 28th New Braunfels Annual Fall Train Show. (Sponsored by New Braunfels Railroad Museum). Sat. 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Sun. 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Adults 14 & Over \$8, Kids 5 to 13 \$2 Kids under 5 Free. Scouts & Scout Leaders in uniform Free. New Braunfels Civic Center, 375 South Castell Avenue, New Braunfels, TX. More information: www.newbraunfelsrailroadmuseum.org/trainshow.

November

24th Crescent City Model Railroad Club Open House. Sat. 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Adults \$7, Children 6-12 \$3, 5 and under Free. 601 N Lester Ave, Metairie, LA. More information: <http://www.ccmrc.com>.

December

8th, 15th – 16th Crescent City Model Railroad Club Open House. Sat. 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Sun. 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Adults \$7, Children 6-12 \$3, 5 and under Free. 601 N Lester Ave, Metairie, LA. More information: <http://www.ccmrc.com>.

January 2019

5th Crescent City Model Railroad Club Open House. Sat. 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Adults \$7, Children 6-12 \$3, 5 and under Free. 601 N Lester Ave, Metairie, LA. More information: <http://www.ccmrc.com>.

March 2019

16th – 17th Cotton Belt Historical Society, Tyler TAP Chapter Annual Train Show. Sat. 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Sun. 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Adults \$7, Kids under 12 Free. Tyler Rose Garden Center, 420 Rose Park Drive, Tyler, TX. For more information: Steven Garbarino (903) 388-5354, or www.cottonbeltdepotmuseum.com.

Excursion Train Trips

Austin Steam Train; Cedar Park, TX; (512) 477-8468; www.austinsteamtrain.org

Grapevine Vintage Railroad; Grapevine, TX; (817) 410-3185; www.gvrr.com

Old Hickory Railroad; Jackson, LA; (225) 634-7397; www.louisianasteamtrain.com

Texas State Railroad; Palestine & Rusk, TX; (888) 987-2461; www.texasstaterr.com

Please consider our deadlines for submittals and publications to allow adequate lead time to correctly announce your event – Column submission deadlines are the 15th of January, April, July and October; publication of the Marker Lamp is the middle of the following





Who's track goes there?



You tell me who's layout this big photo is from, and I give the first person to email me the correct answer at rrduino@huntatrophy.com a campfire lighting Arduino next time we meet!
Last "Who's track" winner: Congratulations to Dr Richard Kamm for correctly admitting that the photo was from his [Sue Line](#) in Shreveport, LA!



A Brief History (and Back Story) of the **SPRING RIVER & WESTERN RAILROAD**

By Carl Lester, MMR



A Brief History

In 1898, partners, William “Wild Bill” Engulf and Simon “Dead Eye” Devaore needed a way to enhance their mining and cattle operations in the Spring River Valley, so they founded the Spring River & Western Railroad.

The Spring River & Western (SR&W) is wholly owned by the Engulf & Devaore, Inc (E&D, Inc) Mining and Timber conglomerate. The SR&W has trackage rights on the East and West Northern Pacific main lines and associated branch lines. The SR&W interchanges with the Great Northern, Union Pacific, SP&S, SRTC, E&DLC and the Burlington Northern at the main East and West yards at Spring River.

The SR&W, headquarters is located in the E&D, Inc building and the main passenger depot in the town of Spring River.

Today Wild Bill and Dead Eye’s grandchildren manage the daily railroad operation of the SR&W.

The Back Story

The SR&W is a product of my imagination. After discovering the Northern Pacific Railroad and its connection to Lester, Washington. The NP became my source of knowledge for the SR&W.

1973: The SR&W, an HO scale layout, came to life in our garage on a 4'x8', ½" plywood tabletop with the help from an NMRA couple, Al and Thelma Lonsberry that we met while stationed in Charleston, South Carolina. They requested that I join the NMRA or no help would be available; I did and the help came.

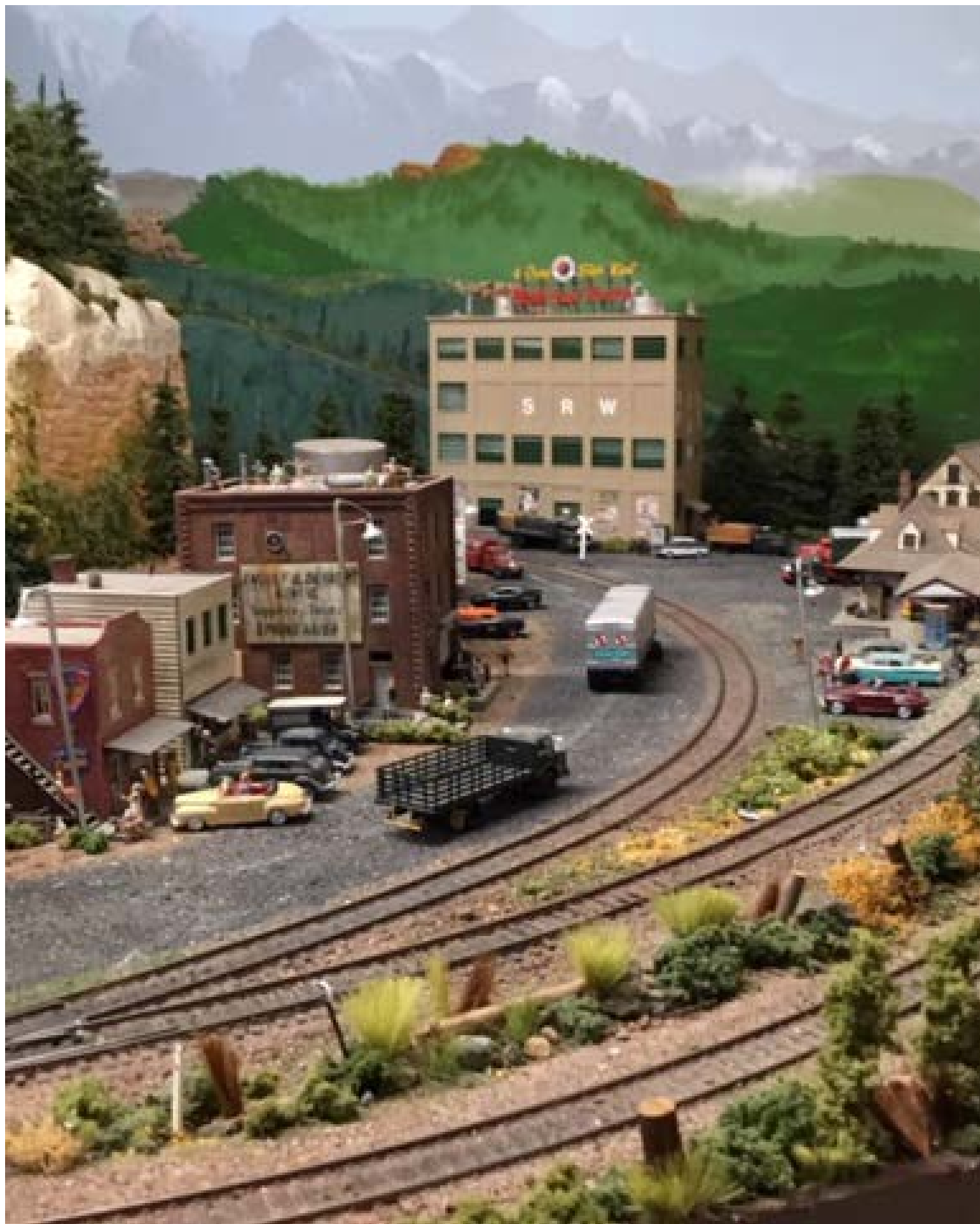
1983: After retiring from the USAF, and moving to Houston, Texas, the SR&W survived in a spare bedroom.

1991: The SR&W moved once again to College Station, Texas where it resides today in a 24'x24' garage attached to my home. The railroad is almost complete, as if a model railroad can ever be completed.

2019: The SR&W is entirely my creation from design to back drop, to scenery as well as most of the rolling stock. You are welcome to visit the SR&W most anytime, just call ahead to be sure the engineer Carl Lester is in residence.

ML



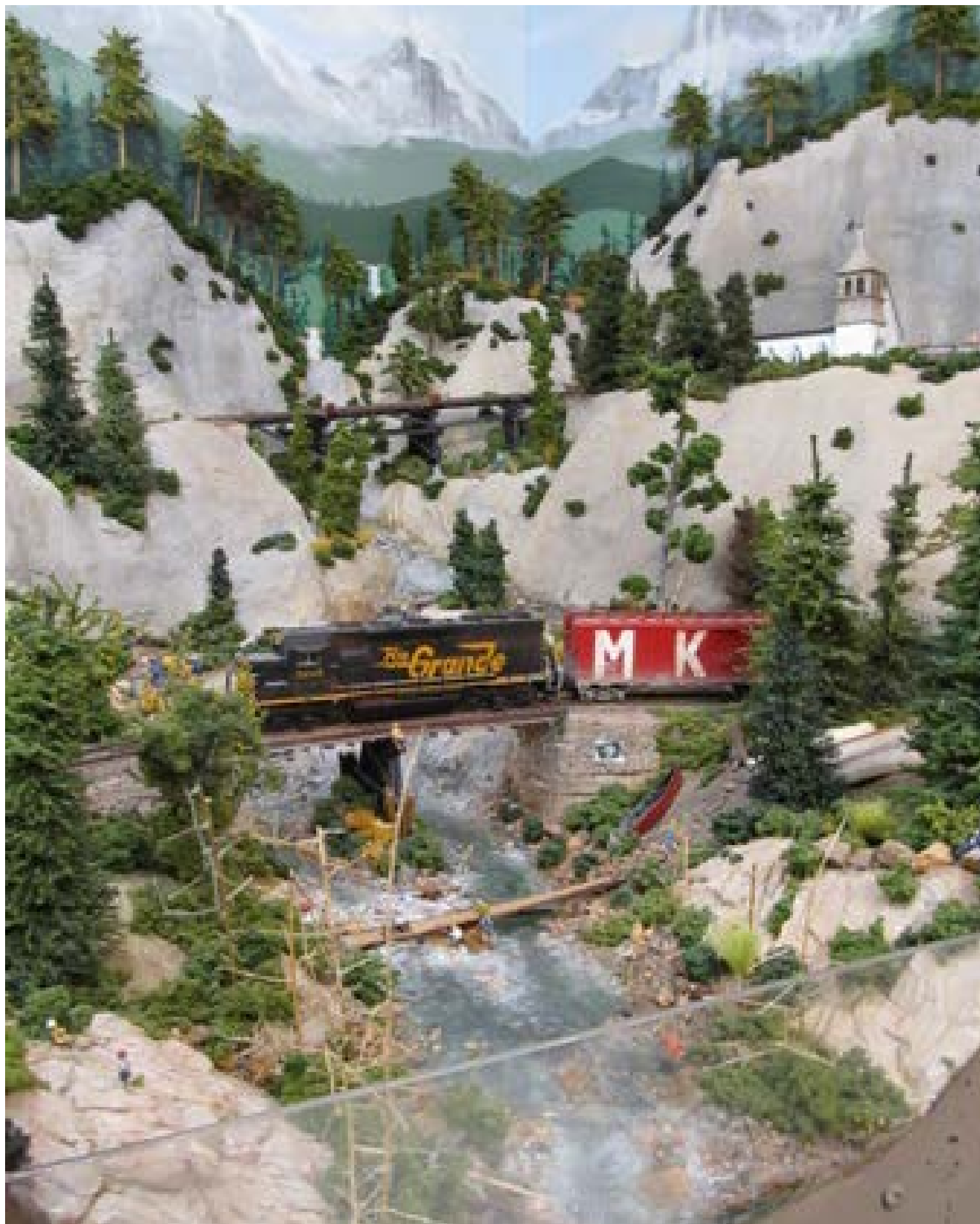














No Room at the Inn: An Unusual Christmas Guest

By Bob Barnett, MMR
LSR Historian



This time of year we are all familiar with the Christmas Story and the “no room at the Inn” saying. But this year I have an unusual corollary to add. As many of you that have operated or visited the River City Union Terminal know in good weather I frequently open the garage doors and run the layout open air style. Such was the case a couple of days before Christmas this year. While grilling outside I opened the layout room and ran a couple of trains around getting ready for the visit by my grandson. When we finished grilling and dinner I returned and closed-up the layout room for the night.

The next morning, in keeping with layout owners everywhere, I hauled out a load of “stuff” from the house to be stashed in the layout room while we have visitors in the house for the Holidays. But something looked amiss. It is not unusual on a windy day for a billboard or some trees to get turned over by a gust of wind, but there were random items turned over at different locations around the layout. What really caught my eye was four Hallmark Texas Eagle cars (read heavy brass construction) turned over on their side and across the platform several more, older Hallmark and Walther’s heavyweight cars turned over. No way the wind could have done this. Could someone have gotten into the room during

the night? But a vandal would have done more damage and a thief would have taken something.

So I continued to search the room for clues. At this point, only the overhead lights were on, and the lower level of the railroad was still dark.

I looked at Rain’s Grain a tall white grain elevator and to the left Freitag Brewery and equally tall brick structure. In between are two shorter bulk oil dealers, Currey Fuel Oil and Redmond Texaco. But something else was present between the two larger structures. I switched on the lower level lights and there was a full-grown possum asleep on top of a line of tank cars spotted to the fuel dealers. And he was not alarmed by the situation. I nicely invited him to leave but he was much more interested in finishing his nap than leaving the layout room in broad daylight. I could have helped him along with a broom or shovel but that would invite more mayhem and destruction. So, the best thing to do was to wait until dark when he would awake and wander out in search of food and water. The doors stayed open all day in hopes he would show himself out after dark.

Now being a couple of days before Christmas we had kids arriving at the airport an only an hour apart. My



wife picked up the first load and I followed later to get the second load. On my way home I got a call that the possum was gone and the layout room closed and secured. All's well that ends well, right? Well sort of. When I got home I went out to make sure that the critter was really gone. After quite a search I located a pair of eyes staring out from the entrance to the spiral in the back end of the train room. Of course, there was no prompting him to leave again. And he was in a more un-reachable place than before. Nothing to do but darken the room, leave to doors open and wait until he departs in the wee hours of the night.

Sure enough, about 3:30 am I heard a strange whining and I went out to check. The layout room was empty, and I took some time to look everywhere. Assured he was gone I closed the room and went in for the rest of the night. The next day I spent a couple of hours setting cars back up on the track (he had turned over and derailed every car in Little Rock Yard) and another hour running trains for my grandson.

Happy to have the possum gone and the layout back to normal we locked up and went in. Again, the next day (Christmas Eve) more stuff carted out to be "stored" under the layout. Again, there were items overturned at random spots,

but this time only on the lower level. I look EVERYWHERE and still no possum. Moving some furniture on rollers I finally found him asleep (again) in a tiny space between the spiral (which is wrapped in Masonite) and a book shelf. By this time, I was growing very weary of our uninvited guest, but again he was in an unreachable spot. So, back to Plan B ...again. But this time we built two walls of boxes about 3 feet high forcing him the exit via the chute out the from doors. And this time Plan B (actually Plan "B" (MODIFIED) worked, and he did leave. And stayed out this time.

The most amazing thing about this story is he was in the train room for nearly 48 hours and did not any real damage. A few cars lost end stirrups and one tank car lost a ladder. No real serious or expensive damage. That says a lot for the durability of the good old Athearn and Model Die Casting cars. They hold up well for operating sessions and if you have wild critter in your neighborhood.

Incidentally I only have the doors open if I am present in the room now. No more uninvited guest and no Room at the Inn. **ML**



Backdrops

By Richard Kamm



Photo A above

Photo B below

Make no mistake about it. The Sue Line is about operations. It is the glue that helps bring together a disparate group of people together each Thursday night. Over the past several months, I've had the honor and pleasure of bringing to your attention a group of people who have influenced me and my enjoyment of the hobby especially in regards to operations. I'm now going to switch tracks (pun intended) and share some thoughts on the evolution of different aspects of the layout.

When I first started, like many modelers, I had no backdrop (Photo A from Malcolm Vordenbaum). It was just whatever was on the wall of the room I had my layout in. The basic white wall was the usual result. However, after reading the writings of Frank Ellison, Bill McClanahan, John





Photo C

Armstrong, John Allen, and others I discovered that there are many types of effective backgrounds. If your layout is to be the stage on which your trains are the actors, then I felt I must begin at the back of the scene and work forward. Just as in at the theater there is a backdrop to “set the place”. I felt a backdrop was necessary.

For my first backdrop, I just painted the wall a pleasing shade of blue. Later, with the help of my mother, an artist, I started to use three shades of blue, the lightest shade at the horizon, the middle shade in the middle and the darkest shade at the top. This was done to reflect the natural gradations of light we have here in Louisiana. Later, I discovered coving. This was using rounded luan plywood or Masonite at the top of my wall to gently bring the wall and

ceiling together. I constructed a special box for the corners. It was at this point that I began to appreciate the depth a backdrop added to a scene.

My first hand-painted backdrops (Photo B, done by my wife, and Photo C, done by a friend, Daggi Wallace) began to add more detail to the horizon. If you want hand-painted there are numerous well-done videos available on how to paint backdrops from simple clouds to complex industrial locations. Some have turned to hiring someone to paint what you want.

As the years went by, I began to use commercial lithographs (Photo D from Walther’s). The effect was impressive and added a great deal to the backdrop. However, they were still less than what I wanted. Next, I found and

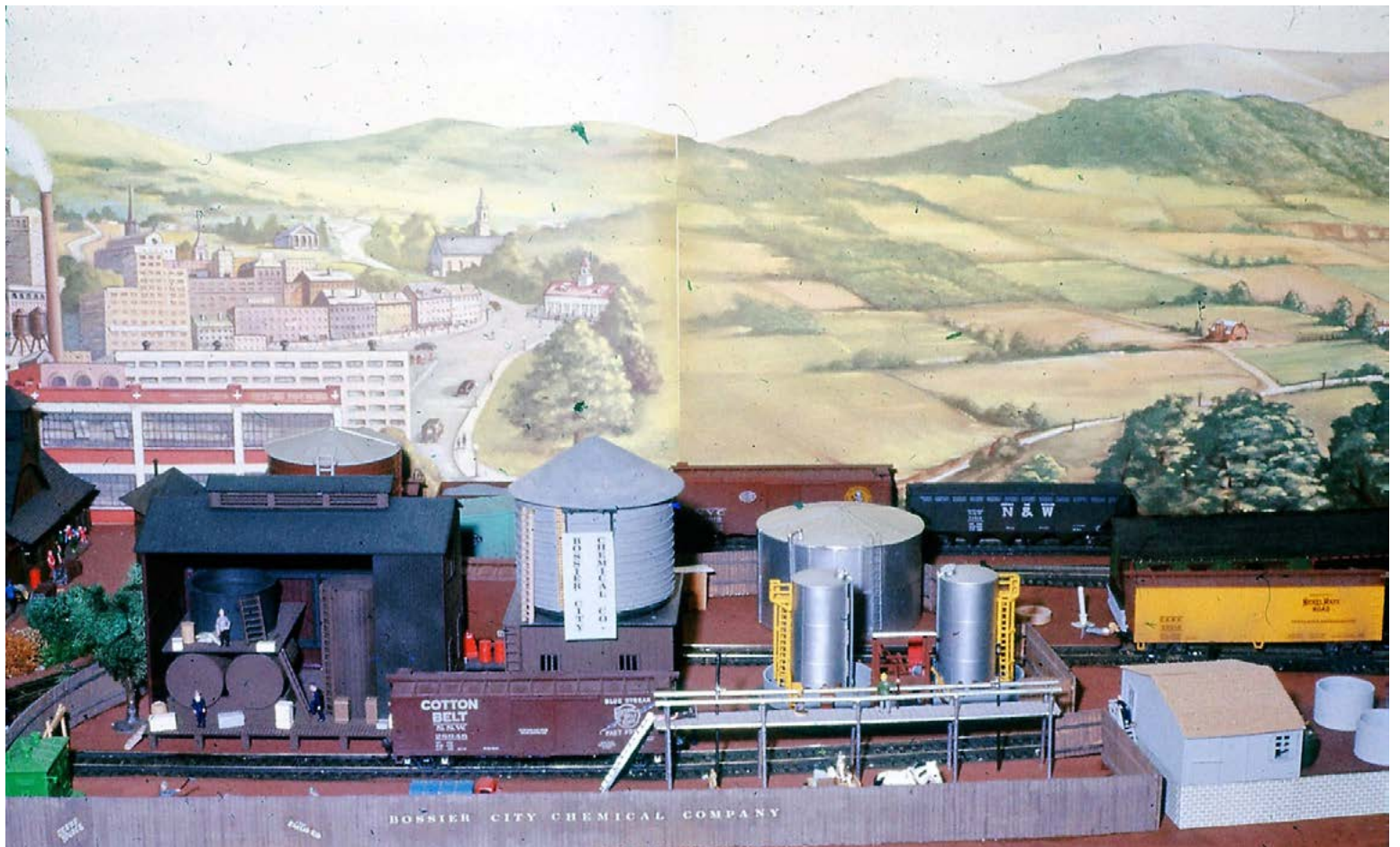


Photo D above

Photo E below





Photo F

used commercial photographs (Photo E and F) which added even more detail to the backdrop. I then noticed the field of vision that the backdrop added to the scene. My eye did not just stop at the back edge of the layout. I became aware that I could now focus on a part of the scene and not try to see everything at once. This effect became most noticeable when photographs were taken of the layout. There are numerous sources for commercial photographic backdrops.

Backdrops are not the solution for every situation. Sometimes, I let the rest of the railroad be the backdrop,

especially when I have a center island or peninsula. There are areas when they add immensely to the effect of distance in the overall effect. Other areas are best suited for letting the railroad extend onto itself (Photo G).

While not an absolute necessity for operations, backdrops do help to "set the scene", they do help to reinforce where the railroad is located. They give an atmosphere to the railroad. Mountains, plains, swamps, or cities- they all help give the railroad a stage to operate on. I model in Louisiana and our highest "mountain" is just over 500 feet above sea



Photo G

level, so no Rocky Mountains for me. Flat is the rule of the day! Naturally, you should choose the backdrop that best suits the story that you are trying to tell with your railroad.

Time to bring the backdrop to the forefront of your planning and efforts.

ML

Addendum: Commercial sources Backdrop Warehouse (Backdropwarehouse.com), Trackside scenery (tracksidescenery.com), Backdrop Junction (backdropjunction.com), and Railroad Backdrops (Railroadbackdrops.com).



...RRduino...

by Speed

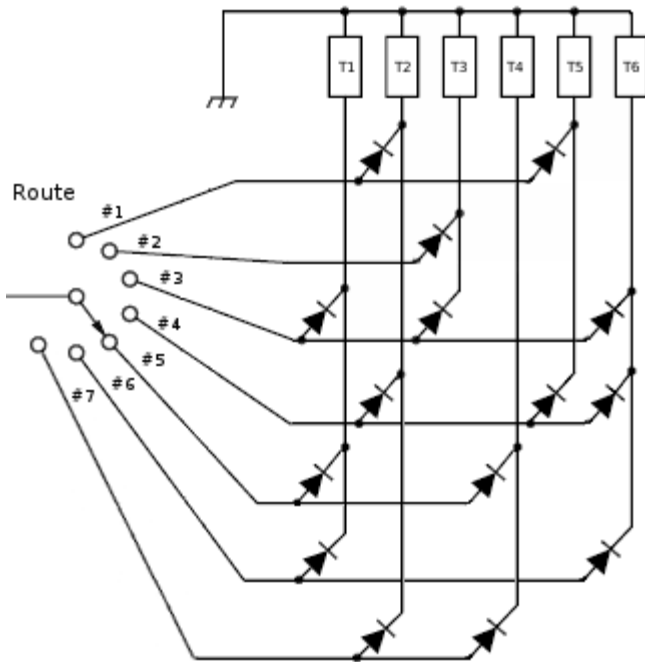
Arduino Sensors to JMRI Routes or Logix to control JMRI Turnouts.



7 Routes to control, each with a single button or Sensor.

Here is an article inspired by two modelers! Thank you David and Rick for mentioning the need to control routes into a yard by pushing a single button on a panel.

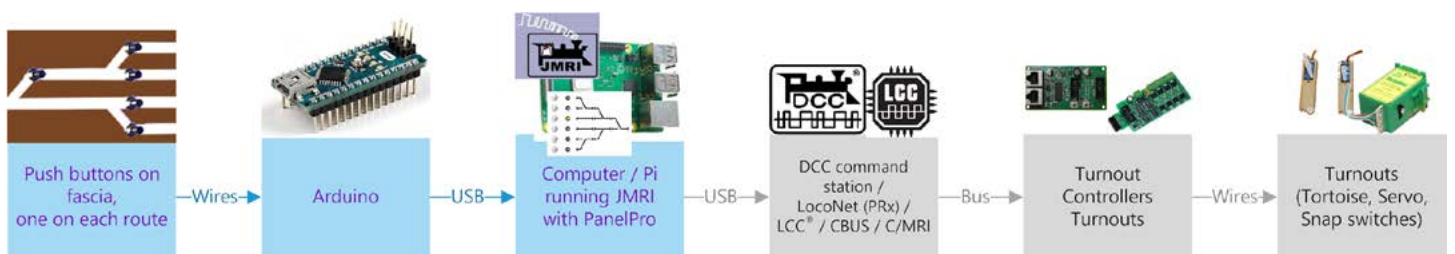
We will explore the path of push buttons connected to an Arduino to provide Sensor inputs into JMRI, which would then use its Route table to determine which Turnouts are thrown or closed. The Turnouts can be servos, tortoise machines or snap switches, and you are in control of how that is connected as DCC accessories, a CAN bus, WiFi or whatever you like. In this article, we will only cover the “input” or “sensor” part, do the Routes and then show how they can become Logix (The part of JMRI where you can check the state of one or more things and do something else if a combination of states are true or false). As shown in the example in the first photo, I would like to send a car down one of my 7 tracks in the hump yard with the push of a single button. Diode matrix you yell:



Diode Matrix, I feel a headache coming! (This shows rotating a knob to select the route)

So instead of opening that can of diode worms, let's instead use our favorite and free JMRI software and create an inexpensive button input Arduino to help. *(All the acronyms are listed and described at the end of the article)*

Geoff Bunza already showed in his awesome MRH article: "[SMA28 JMRI Sensor Channels – Direct Arduino to JMRI Communications - Simple Support for Lots of Detectors](#)", how a Python (also called Jython here) script would read sensors from an Arduino into JMRI, so we are going to provide an alternate approach by faking out a MERG CBUS connection to provide the sensors instead, so you don't need to manage the script. You could also approach this to fake the LCC way, just know that you would not have a real MERG or LCC connection that provides the feature set that those systems provide, only the 16 sensors that we will attach here (or 54 sensors if you use the [MEGA2560](#)).



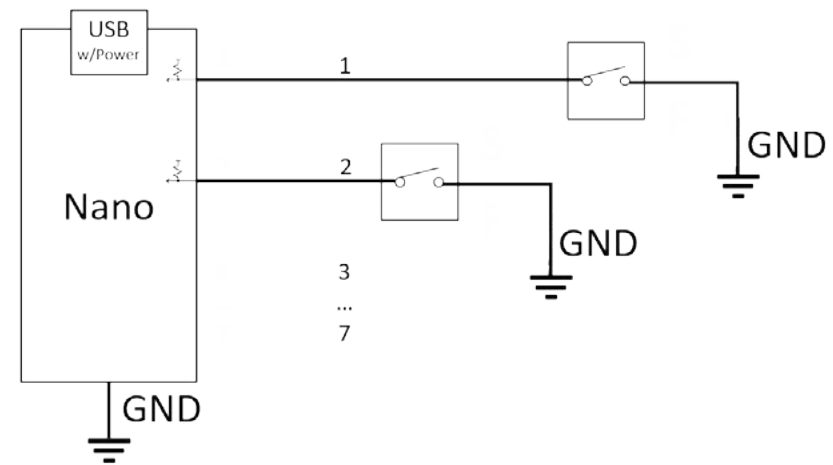
The whole system from push buttons to turnouts. Only blue blocks (left 3) described in this article.

So you would need a computer (or computing module) that can run JMRI (so Java is required) and then have a USB port available, so we can connect the Arduino (Nano in my demo), and of course, also some way to connect to your JMRI Turnouts, as we are going to change Routes with the sensors.

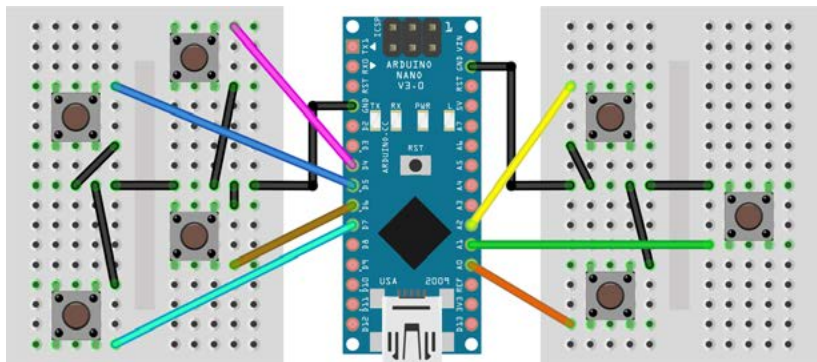
The Nano will be configured with all the pins as inputs with internal pull-up resistors, so your buttons (such as a normally open push button SPST-NO) only need to make it short to GND when pushed or activated. If you are using an occupancy sensor of some sort, it would need to do the same, or you would need to change the logic to read a HIGH as active.

The code on the Nano will keep polling for changes on the inputs, and when a change happens (called an “event”) it would send the going LOW or going HIGH event to JMRI through the USB cable.

Of course, the USB connections is set up on the computer side as a COM port, and that could be anything in Windows looking like COMx, and in a MAC or Unix systems as /dev/ttyUSBx or /dev/ttyACMx, where ‘x’ is a number. This port number is specified in JMRI’s Preferences as part of a System Connection, and if you disconnect the cable or loose power to the Arduino, the operating system might re-assign the communications port number, in which case you would need to close the JMRI application (so the port is closed from the software side), remove and reinsert the USB cable, so you get the original ‘x’ back. If not, then you will need to tell JMRI to use the new ‘x’ and restart it.



1st two push buttons shown the Arduino Nano



All 7 push buttons and GND (black) into the Arduino Nano

So let’s do the Arduino part first and then the JMRI Route table:

As mentioned earlier, the Atmega's input pins have internal pull-up resistors, so we only need to do a `pinMode( PIN_NUMBER, INPUT_PULLUP );` for every pin we are going to use as input and then have the buttons connect the pins to ground as you press them.

```
// This code will send a message out the serial port when any pin,
//   that is declared to be an input, goes HIGH or LOW
// It will send a MERG CBUS looking Long Event On or Off with NN:0 and the EN:xxxx where xxxx will
//   be the decimal of the hexadecimal string declared in the pinValues[] array
// For example, when pin 4 goes low, ":S0000N9000000004;\n" will be sent to JMRI and
// when it goes back hi: ":S0000N91000000004;\n" will be sent
//
// Since the Serialport needs to be connected and up and running, the initial sensor states will
//   not be transfered, but if the Arduino (and not the serial to USB converter) is reset, then
//   all the sensors will produce their events.
//
// Author: Speed Muller
// 2019.02.20

// not used, since the Serial port goes to JMRI instead and we don't want to send a version to JMRI:
// #define VERSION "2019.02.28 InputToJMRI v0.01"

// since we only have one board or Node, the NNNN after the 90 and 91 command, is 0000
#define CBUS_ACTIVE      ":S0000N9000000"
#define CBUS_INACTIVE    ":S0000N9100000"

#define TIMEOUT 200
#define LEDPIN 13
#define NUMPINS 7

int   inputPins[ NUMPINS ] = { 4, 5, 6, 7, A1, A2, A3 };           // pin numbers
char* pinValues[ NUMPINS ] = { "0004", "0005", "0006", "0007",
                                "0008", "0009", "000A" };         // hexadecimal for 10

bool wasHi[ NUMPINS ];      // since we only send events on changes, keep track of state
long int before;            // avoiding delay( ) with millis
long int now;               // avoiding delay( ) with millis

void setup( ) {
    pinMode( LEDPIN, OUTPUT );
    digitalWrite( LEDPIN, HIGH );

    Serial.begin( 115200 );
    for( int i = 0; i < NUMPINS; i++ ) {
        pinMode( inputPins[ i ], INPUT_PULLUP );
        wasHi[ i ] = false;
    } // for

    digitalWrite( LEDPIN, LOW );
    // Don't send this when JMRI is connected:
    //.. Serial.println( VERSION );
    // But it is useful for debugging, could also print it if a
    // character was sent into the serial port, to get the version string on request.

    // send out the current pin states on start-up. The serial port needs to be up and running
```

```

// for JMRI to be happy, so press the Arduino reset button when your Panel is loaded
for( int i = 0; i < NUMPINS; i++ ) {
    if ( digitalRead( inputPins[ i ] ) == HIGH )
        sendInactive( i );
    else
        sendActive( i );
} // for

before = millis( );
} // setup

// send the Active Event for a pin going low
void sendActive( int pin ) {
    digitalWrite( LEDPIN, HIGH );
    wasHi[ pin ] = false;                                // mark that it is high now
    Serial.print( CBUS_ACTIVE );                          // send the "off" or "inactive" part of the string
    Serial.print( pinValues[ pin ] );                    // add the sensor number
    Serial.println( ";" );                                // and the closing ';'
    delay( 10 );                                          // attempt to do some debouncing here
    digitalWrite( LEDPIN, LOW );
} // sendActive( int )

// send the Inctive Event for a pin going high
void sendInactive( int pin ) {
    digitalWrite( LEDPIN, HIGH );
    wasHi[ pin ] = true;                                  // mark that it is low now
    Serial.print( CBUS_INACTIVE );                        // send the "on" or "active" part of the string
    Serial.print( pinValues[ pin ] );                    // add the sensor number
    Serial.println( ";" );                                // and the closing ';'
    delay( 10 );                                          // attempt to do some debouncing here
    digitalWrite( LEDPIN, LOW );
} // sendInactive( int )

void loop( ) {
    now = millis( );

    if( now - before > TIMEOUT ) {
        before = now;
        for( int i = 0; i < NUMPINS; i++ ) {
            // if the pin was low and we are waiting for it to be high
            if ( wasHi[ i ] == false ) {
                // and now it becomes high...
                if ( digitalRead( inputPins[ i ] ) == HIGH ) {
                    sendInactive( i );
                } // if waiting for HIGH
            } else {
                if ( digitalRead( inputPins[ i ] ) == LOW ) {
                    sendActive( i );
                } // if waiting for LOW
            } // if we were low
        } // for i
    } // time to do some checking
} // loop

```

We are doing a little bit of debouncing here, to avoid a sensor going active and inactive multiple times. The result is delaying the code a bit, which means you can now press and let go of a button really quick and the input will not register. Once you get used to the “press it for more than ½ a second”, life will be good again. If you really need to have all 16 inputs pressed at almost the same time, an interrupt driven approach is needed. Who wants to see that in a future article?

Once you copied the code into the Arduino, compiled and uploaded, you can test in it the Serial Port Terminal in the Arduino IDE (Ctrl+Shift+M). If your baud rate is set to 115,200 and you press the reset button on the board, you should see all the sensor pins report their status with the 90 or 91 command. Make sure you close the Serial Port Terminal before you launch JMRI, since JMRI would need the specific COM port to be free.

In order to set PanelPro (version 4.14 here) up with the MERG CBUS Connection Protocol, you will need to navigate with Edit → Preferences to Connections (at the top left) and create a new Connection on the right side with the + tab. Select “**MERG**” as the System manufacturer, “**CAN via MERG CAN-RS or CAN-USB**” as the System connection and make sure the correct Serial port is selected (COMx or /dev/ttyUSBx or /dev/ttyACMx, depending on your operating system) for the connection to the Arduino. Of course you would know the port name and/or number since you just programmed the Arduino, but if this is a different computer, the Ports in Device Manager in Windows will show the port appear and disappear as you plug the Arduino in or out, and Linux and Mac OS would show the device added or removed with an `ls -al /dev/tty*`

Connection Prefix and Name as **M** and **MERG** is fine, but click the Additional Connection Settings box to make sure the Baud rate matches the number in the `Serial.begin( 115,200 );` command in your `setup( )` function.

When you click Save in the bottom right of the Preferences window, you will be asked to Restart PanelPro, go ahead and do so. Once restarted, you will see the main PanelPro window showing the use of MERG and the port number. If this line ever turns red, you are most likely to have the wrong port number specified. Fix it in Preferences and restart PanelPro again.

First we need to create the Sensors in the Sensor Table, then the Turnouts to control and only then we can set up the needed Routes. A MERG Sensor in one of its forms looks something like **MS+N0E0** where the Node Number (0 in our Arduino code) is specified after the N and the Event Number is declared after the E. If Event “00000000” is sent with the Active or 90 command, this sensor will go Active and as you might expect, the same sensor goes Inactive when the 91 or Inactive for “00000000” shows up. As you can see from the 0x0000 just for the Event part and 0x0000 for the Node part, you can easily control 65,535 times 65,535 Sensors from a single Arduino, if of course, you had 4,294,967,295 input pins!

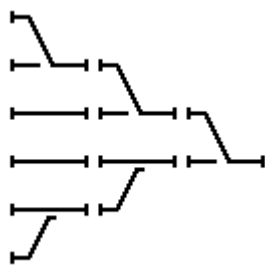
You also need to know that when you click the **Add...** button at the bottom of the Sensor Table (Tools → Tables → Sensors) and change the System Connection to MERG, you only need to type the +N0E0 part in, since the MS for MERG Sensor is added by the software. Good idea to give it a unique User Name too, since the numbers in the System Names can make your head spin. I also like to put some extra zeros in the System Name so sorting it alphabetically would keep them in the same order. Since our code earlier starts the sensors at 0004 and we will have less than 100 sensors, I created the first sensor with 04 as in +N00E04 and the

table now shows it as MS+N00E04. Create the next 6 sensors all the way through to MS+N00E10, since 0x000A equals 10 in the decimal world.

As you toggle or trigger the 7 sensors on the board, the Sensor table would change the Unknown state of each to Active and Inactive. Of course, if you press the reset button on the Nano or Uno, all the sensors will be reported when the code starts up.

A note of caution when using the ATmega32U4 types of Arduinos, when you reset the board, you would also lose the serial port to the computer. If JMRI is keeping COM4 open, the board might boot up and now show up as COM5 since COM4 was in use. Now you will need to stop PanelPro, reset the board again to get COM4 back, to avoid reconfiguring JMRI every time.

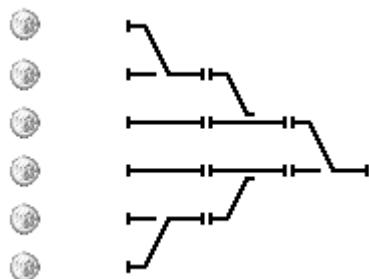
Since your turnouts are connected to JMRI to something we don't know here, may it be DCC with NCE or Digitrax or C/MRI, we will create them as Internal Turnouts for this exercise in JMRI's PanelPro. IT001 through IT005 it is. To help with the Route debugging, you can place them on a Panel (I like using the Panel Editor):



Panel Editor: Left and Right handed Turnouts in PanelPro.

Always a good idea to “Lock” the position of an item on the Panel when you don't accidentally want to move them around.

Then the Arduino MS+NxxEyy Sensors to the left (I used Code Buttons for all 4 states), then “Lock Position” and make them “Momentary” from the menu after a right mouse click on each Sensor. Momentary will simulate it a little closer to your button press and let go on the Arduino inputs.



Panel Editor: momentary buttons as Sensors and Turnouts in PanelPro from left to right.

And then for the magic...PanelPro → Tools → Tables → Routes, **Add...** in the bottom left, check the Automatically generate System Name (since we won't use the name anytime soon) and give the Route a User Name like Track 1, or Top Track, or a destination label like "Houston" if you have a hump yard.

Now you pick the Turnouts to be included in this Route. For the top track in the diagram, we would want IT001, IT002 and IT004 all three to be Set to Thrown when the top Sensor (MS+N00E04, shown Active or Yellow in the diagram) goes active, or trigger. And then remember to click the "Create" button at the bottom right.

The second track from the top would be triggered by MS+N00E05 and it would Set Thrown IT001 and IT002 and Set Closed IT004.

With only these two Sensors in place, you can start testing the Routes between Track 1 and Track 2, by either clicking on the Sensors on the Panel (which are momentary now), the Sensors in the Table (which are not momentary) OR the buttons going into your Arduino. If your sensors are not momentary, remember that the last one that changes to Active, will set the last Route, and will this determine the outcome!

After you complete all the new Routes you will have:

```
MS+N00E04: Set Thrown IT001, Set Thrown IT002, Set Thrown IT004
MS+N00E05: Set Thrown IT001, Set Thrown IT002, Set Closed IT004
MS+N00E06: Set Thrown IT001, Set Closed IT002
MS+N00E07: Set Closed IT001, Set Closed IT003
MS+N00E08: Set Closed IT001, Set Closed IT003, Set Closed IT005
MS+N00E09: Set Closed IT001, Set Closed IT003, Set Thrown IT005
```

(Isn't this a little less work than soldering that diode matrix? Just asking...the good news is you don't have to unsolder anything if you decide to change any part of it!!!)

Note that you can add an optional Additional delay between Turnout Commands in milliseconds, in a case where you need capacitors to charge again to throw the snapping kind of switches, or when the brakeman has to walk a bit to throw the next one, ;)

Remember to save often, as you'll get the notice when you close the screen.

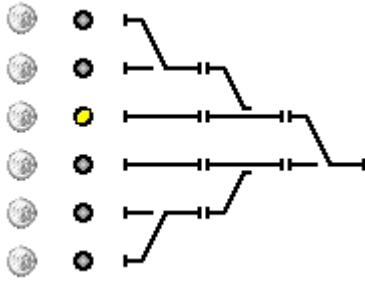
The Route can also be locked with a Turnout, all on that same Add/Edit Route screen. In the far bottom corner, there is also a button to "Export to Logix", but be careful, the Route will MOVE to become Logix, and thus disappear from your list of Routes. It is also important to save to a file, and restart JMRI to load the saved file. Seems like the Routes are still in memory somewhere in 4.14, so when you start editing the Logix, things don't work as expected.

Once it is a Logix, you can use the "Browse" button to see what happens behind the scenes:

```
TXIR:AUTO:00041T 00E071C Track 4
```

```
[x] R1 IF AND Sensor "00E07" state is "Sensor Active"
      THEN
        On Change To True, Set Turnout, "001" to Closed
        On Change To True, Set Turnout, "003" to Closed
```

Another cool feature in the Route window is the **Sensor that Activates when all the Route Turnouts are correctly aligned (optional)**. So now a Sensor could light up next to the track where the train would go to. I suggest you create 7 new Internal sensors (IS004 through IS010) to display which Route is triggered. You don't want to use the MS+NxxEyy Sensors for this, since moving points in turnouts might activate Routes during the process and as those Routes become Active temporarily, their Sensors will now get activated, and then insist that a new Route be triggered. A little nasty loop situation that leaves the wrong Route being selected!

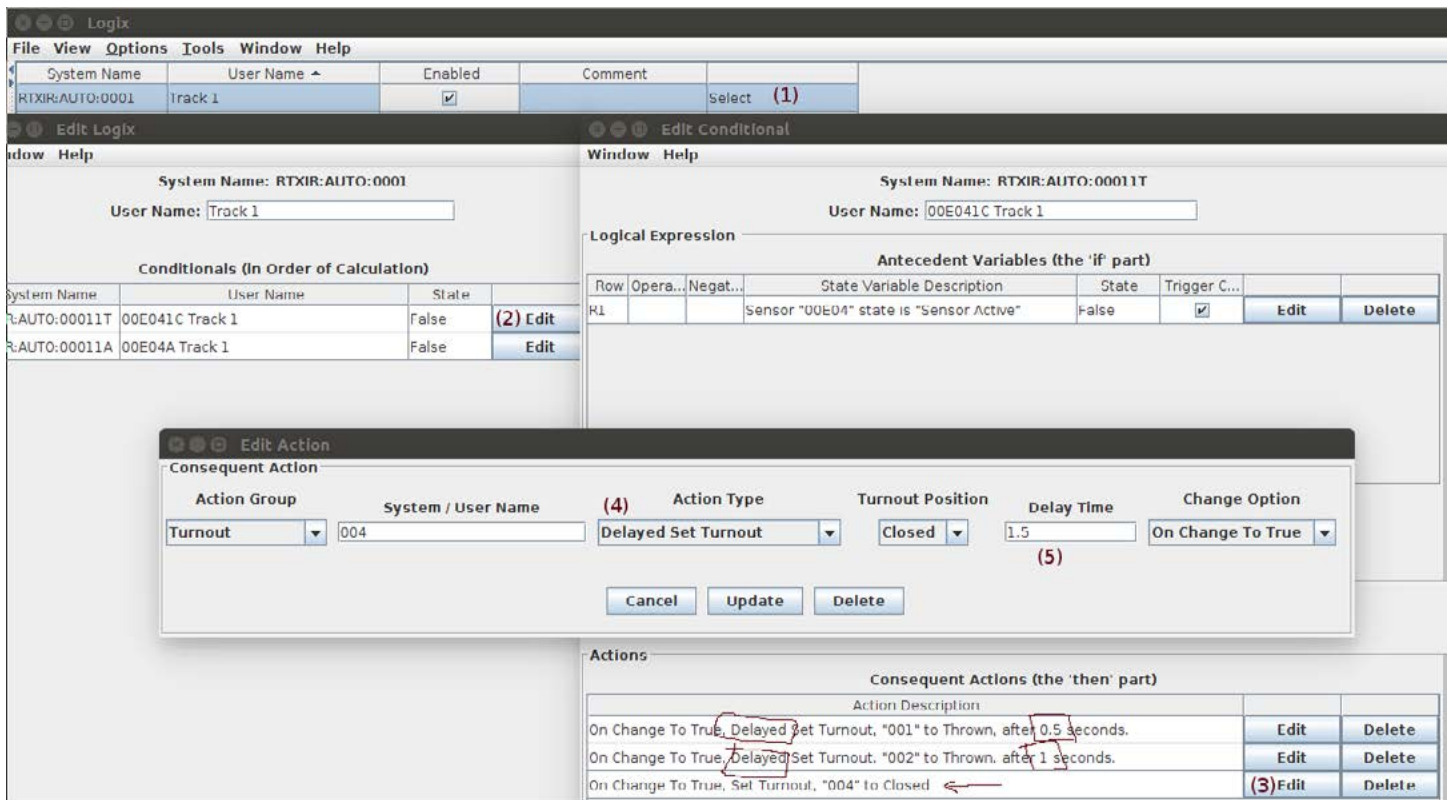


Panel Editor: momentary buttons, active route sensors and turnouts in PanelPro from left to right.

```
RTXIR:AUTO:00031T 00E061C Track 3
[x] R1 IF AND Sensor "00E06" state is "Sensor Active"
      THEN
        On Change To True, Set Turnout, "001" to Thrown
        On Change To True, Set Turnout, "002" to Closed

RTXIR:AUTO:00031A 00E06A Track 3
[x] R1 IF AND Turnout "001" state is "Turnout Thrown"
[x] R2 AND Turnout "002" state is "Turnout Closed"
      THEN
        On Change To True, Set Sensor, "(IS)006" to Active
        On Change To False, Set Sensor, "(IS)006" to Inactive
```

I did notice that the Turnout delay is not transferring when I moved all over to Logix and when triggering the Sensor, it did not turn active after all the Turnouts changed. But when you change the Turnout itself, the Logix will activate the correct Sensor. The two files are online as `AllInRoutes.xml` and `AllInLogix.xml`.



Editing the Action in a Conditional in a Logix in PanelPro

The delay can be reinstated in the Edit Logic (step #1 in diagram below), Edit Conditional (#2), Consequent Actions Edit the action (#3), by changing the Action Type (#4) from Set Turnout to Delayed Set Turnout. Know that the time (#5) is now in seconds (and not milliseconds) and it will be the time from when the Conditional turned True, so you might need to set the first turnout after 0.5 seconds, the second one after 1 seconds and the last one after 1.5 seconds.

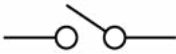
So you would ask, why come to JMRI to do the Routes? Why is the Arduino not also throwing the switches in the Turnouts ... well, why not add the CAN bus part like in prior articles and get the whole MERG CBUS going? The intent here was to show off how easy it is to create inputs and to allow you to use your current DCC ([Switch-IT Mk2](#) for example), LocoNet ([SE8C](#) for example) or other connected turnouts to be controlled. JMRI on a new computer, old computer, \$30 Raspberry [Pi 3 B+](#) or even a \$5 Raspberry [Pi Zero W](#) will give you a little easier keyboard and mouse access into a Table, than creating arrays or if then else statements in the C code.

As usual, watch when copying code, there is a big difference between “,” and “. Only the last one is useful. Again, the code, as well as the files used in this article, are to be found for your convenience at the one and only blog.rrduino.com **ML**



Oops, another yard ladder to Route!

Acronyms:

JMRI	Java Model Railroad Interface: The JMRI project is building tools for model railroad computer control. Using Java to run on almost any computer. Contains DecoderPro, PanelPro and OperationsPro to name a few.
MERG	Model Electronic Railway Group: An international, UK based group promoting interest in the application of electronics & computers to all aspects of railway modelling.
CAN	Controller Area Network: A robust vehicle bus standard designed to allow microcontrollers and devices to communicate with each other in applications without a host computer. Works quite well under train layouts too!
DCC	Digital Command Control: An NMRA standard for a system to operate model railways digitally. When equipped, locomotives on the same electrical section of track can be independently controlled.
LCC	Layout Command Control: An NMRA standard for peer-to-peer (computing device to any other computing device on the network) system for controlling all of the functions on your layout unrelated to how fast the locomotive is moving -- things like signals, turnout control, or layout lighting. Currently using CAN, expandable to WiFi,
CBUS	A universal layout control system: The MERG version of LCC using CAN
Raspberry Pie	Delicious dessert baked at 350° for 50-55 minutes.
SPST-NO	Single Pole Single Throw, Normally Open: 

Kansas City 2018 Pro Tours

By Ken Kaiser



If you were unable to attend the NMRA 2018 convention at Kansas City or missed one or more of the prototypical tours this is your second chance.

1. UNION STATION

The original Kansas City train station (Union Depot)

was built on the West Bottoms land adjacent to the Kansas River. The 1903 flood swamped the station and construction of a new station on higher ground was begun. Union Station was completed in the fall of 1914 (1). The architecture style is a combination of Second Empire and Gothic Revival (2,3). The inside was elaborated decorated as can be seen in the main



1



2



3



4



5



6

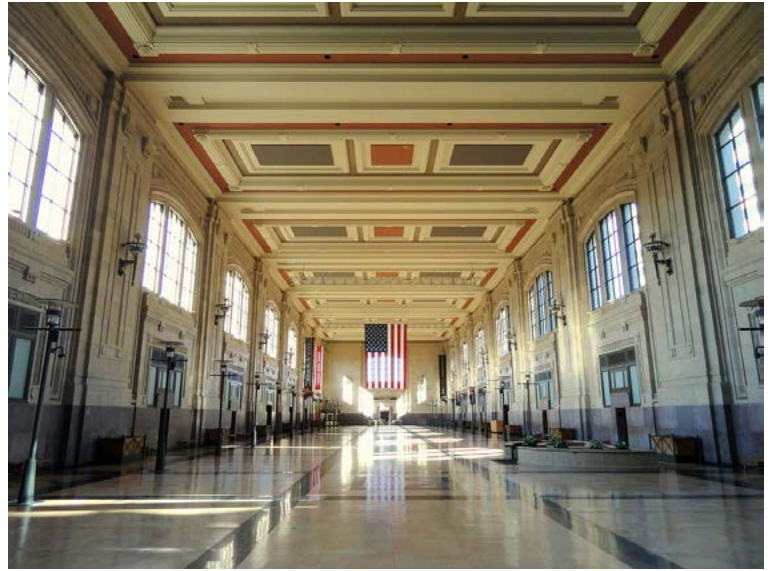
room (pix and the north waiting room (6). Sconces decorated the walls (7) and chandeliers hung from the ceiling (8). It is the second largest station in the U.S. and in its heyday over one hundred passenger trains a day came and went from railroads such as ATSF, CGW,CRI&PMKT,SLSF and KCS.

A new AMTRAK station is attached to the north side

(9) and it is serviced by the Southwest Chief (Chicago to Los Angeles) and the Missouri River Flyer (St. Louis to Kansas City). The northbound SW Chief must pass the station (10) and back into the station (11) where it picks up another car for the trip to Chicago (12).



7



8



9



10



11

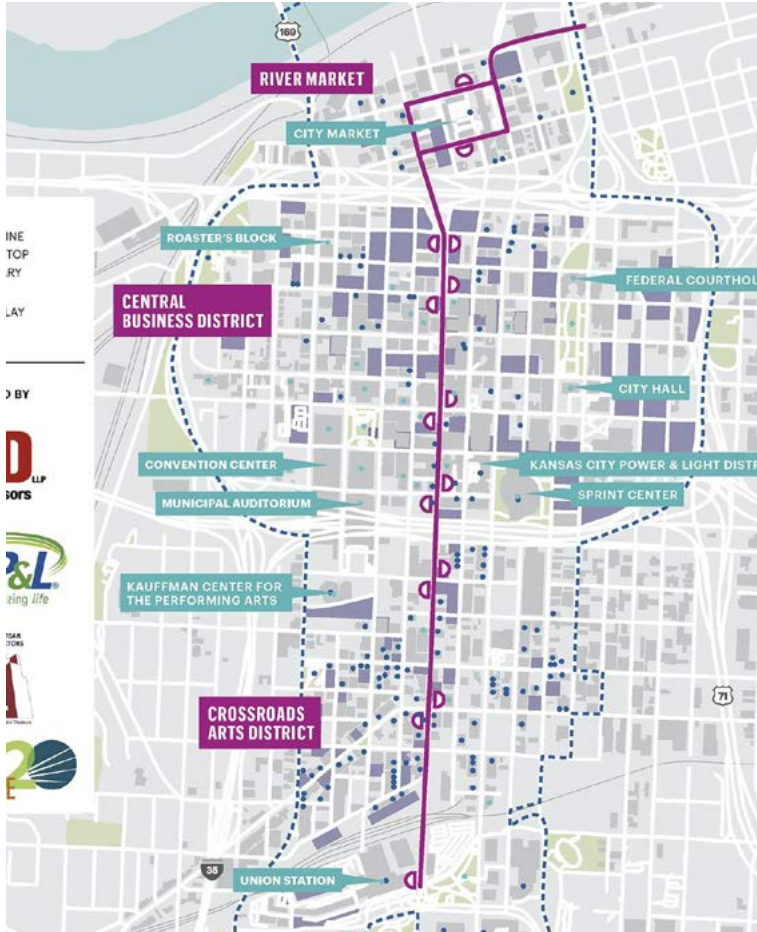


12

2. KC STREET CAR

The KC Streetcar is a free trolley service that begins at Union Station (1, 2) and goes to the River Market area and returns to Union Station. There are fifteen stops on the four mile round trip.

We visited the KC Streetcar Vehicle Maintenance Facility at their Singleton Yard (3). They can service two car sets at a time and have three service levels (4, 5, 6). When the trucks are removed for servicing (7, 8) they have a dolly to place under the car (9). Of course there is wash room to clean the cars before they go back in service (10). One final check (11, 12) and it's out the door (13).



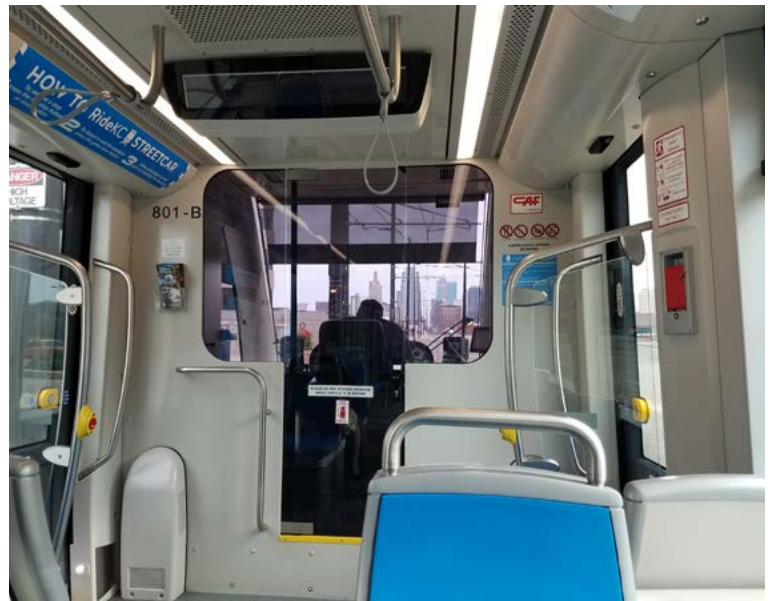
1



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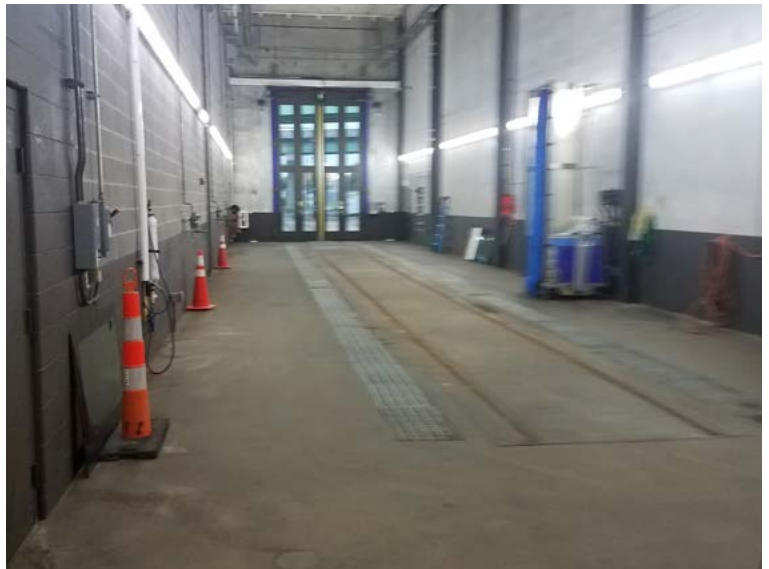
7



8



9



10



11



13



12

3 ATSF DIAMOND

The ATSF diamond (1) is unique in many ways. It is adjacent to the Kansas River and a north bound UP freight is exiting the lower level of a two level railroad bridge over the Missouri River (2). Both tracks lead to the UP Armourdale freight yard on the Kansas side of the river. The elevated upper level crosses over the diamond avoiding north and southbound traffic (3). While the diamond is used by both UP and BNSF Freight the Diamond is controlled by the Kansas City Terminal railway (4).

The Santa Fe control tower is no longer in use but the Santa Fe sign is still visible (5). The Kansas River floods have caused damage to the lower level several times so the bridge was retrofitted with a set of six screws which can lift the bridge up during flood conditions (6). The UP inter coastal line is elevated over all rails (7). Signals in this picture (8) are soon to be replaced with color light signals.



1



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4. KANSAS BELLE DINNER TRAIN



The Kansas Belle Dinner Train is a 20 mile round trip excursion (1) run by the Midland Railroad. It goes from the Baldwin City depot (2) past NOWARE (3) to Ottawa and return. Included in the trip is a gourmet dinner. The consist included a converted Alco RS3 diesel retrofitted with a GM prime mover (4) and four dining cars the Fountainebleau Springs [Canadian National built 1955] (5 & 6), the Maple

Creek [Canadian National built 1942], the Rose Creek [Canadian National built 1947], the Marais Des Cygnes River [Illinois Central built 1947] and a baggage car used as a kitchen and storage car.

The diesel has both GM and ALCO builders plates (7 & 8). In the yard was a Midland RR switcher (9), baggage car and transfer caboose (10) and a second set of passenger cars (11) used in rail fan trips.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11

5. LATAN GENERATION STATION

The Latan facility is located in Weston Missouri. Unit 2 is a coal-fired steam electric power unit with a pulse jet fabric filter and a wet flue gas desulfurization system (1). The right tower is no longer in use and will be taken down brick by brick from the top. Unit 2 produces a nominal net electric power output of 850 MW (2). The plant uses one and a half train loads of coal each day.

BNSF delivers the coal in sets of 125 cars (3). The train enters the unloading facility on a loop (4 & 5). As they pass through the facility the cars are rotated and the coal is

dumped and the empty cars continue around the loop (6). Once the rotary rail dump cars are unloaded the coal is transported up to the coal storage bunkers through conveyor belts (7). Coal is transported to the crush house by conveyor belts where it is crushed into small pieces (8).

It is then transported to the bowl mill where it is grounded to a powder form (9). The coal particles in the form of flakes go to the boiler through pipes and with the help of hot and cold air mixture causes the flakes burn producing steam. The steam in turn spins a turbine which drives a generator to produce electricity.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9

6. MID AMERICA CAR INC.

Mid America Car Inc. is a return to service company (1). Satellite photograph indicates over thirty locomotives were parked outside the facility awaiting repairs (2).

They do major collision repair, electrical and motive power upgrades of railroad locomotives (3,4). They

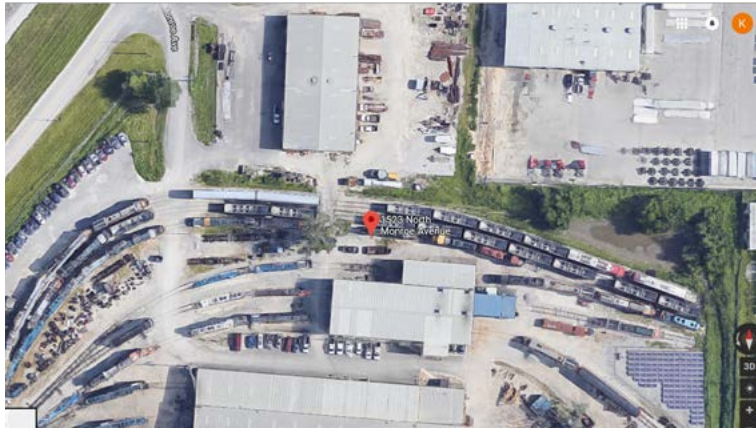
have a state of the art paint facility (5,6). Mobile service away from their facility is available. We were able to take a tour of the repair facilities, ask questions and see staff working on several engines. Since they were in the process of painting an engine we were unable to visit the paint shop.



1



2



3



4



5

7. KANSAS CITY RAIL

We visited many sites in the city to view railroad activity. Among them was the BNSF main line just north of the Union Station. Here we saw a set of empty rotary coal dump cars heading north with a BNSF [SD 70ACe] and Canadian Pacific [AC 440CWM] diesel at the head end (1).

Shortly thereafter nine BNSF diesels emerged dead heading north (2). Adjacent to the station on a siding was a privately owned F7 in the Kansas City South-



6

ern paint scheme along with two passenger cars (3). At another point we encountered the AMTRAK Missouri River Flyer heading to Union Station with five cars. Our railroad employee guide said AMTRAK only needed two cars but BNSF require five to comply with their CTC system (4, 5).

Further down the main line we found a fully loaded coal train heading south. Based on the car markings it appears to be heading for the Latan generating plant (6). Going past the KCS yard we saw this KCS switcher (7).

ML



1



2



3



4



5



6



7

Remembering Jim Thompson

by Bob Sandhaas and Tom Bailey

On December 5, 2018 the Houston Modeler Railroad community lost one of its long-time members, Jim Thompson. He is survived by his loving wife Cindy Thompson of 55 years, his daughter Holly Thompson and her partner Steve Hoffman; grandchildren, Cheyenne LaMarch, Noah LaMarch, and Alivia Hoffman; and his sisters, Phyllis Radzom, Janice Posa, Donna Bock, and Judy Baker.

Jim modeled a fictional West Virginia short line, the Cashaway Valley RR that also interchanged with the N & W and the C & O. The layout's name exemplified his sense of humor. Jim designed his layout in an around the wall configuration to fit a 10 by 20 room adjacent to his garage. The layout featured a small yard, coal mine, a highly detailed waterfront scene that included a scratch built barge, numerous industries, and a branch line featuring a logging operation and a small mine tipple. The entire layout realistically depicted a West Virginia coal hauling short line.

His layout was a masterpiece that equaled or exceeded those written about in the hobby press. Jim possessed the skills of a master craftsman whether it was his highly detailed structures (scratch built or kit bashed), hand laid track, realistically weathered rolling stock and highly detailed locomotives, or his museum quality scenery.

The town of Oakdale provided an excellent example of his craftsmanship. Jim built the entire town in his garage and then placed it on the layout.

Jim loved operations and designed his railroad for that purpose. Peter Bryant, who spoke at Jim's memorial service, stated that Jim held over 160 operating sessions.

Because of his passion for operations, Jim was instrumental in establishing a Tuesday morning round robin group affectionately known as "the Geezers" that operated regularly for more than ten years. Jim also operated regularly on area layouts and regularly hosted operating sessions for Hooters. Jim rarely experienced



any problems during his operating sessions due to his meticulous trackwork and the way he maintained his locomotives and rolling stock.

When it came to electronics, Jim was a virtual genius and go to guy. All sorts of complex electronics could be found on his layout including a working signal system that interfaced with JMRI. In addition, Jim worked extensively with the JMRI Users Group to further refine and improve it. Jim was also the resident expert on JMRI in terms of operations and interfacing JMRI with a railroad.

Jim automated his entire staging yard using JMRI, which was no small feat. He even devised a way for one of the Geezers who could no longer attend operating sessions due to health issues to remotely dispatch railroad.

What Jim will be remembered for more than anything is his willingness to share his expertise in all aspects of the hobby, his many talents, and his time in helping fellow model railroaders. If there a person who deserved the title of a master model railroader, then Jim Thompson has surely earned it.

Please check out Art Houston's video tribute to Jim Thompson.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0FLaB7hWnzA>

ML

*First published January 2019 in San Jacinto Model Railroad Club's
The Derail*





CCMRC 60th Anniversary Club Car Order Form

The Crescent City Model Railroad club in Metairie, Louisiana still has a few of its Accurail Crescent Lines 50 foot HO Scale boxcar that was made to celebrate its 60th Anniversary in 2016. It is available for a donation of \$30.00 for each car, plus \$6.00 shipping for the first car and \$2.00 for each additional car ordered. It is available in one road number that commemorates the clubs founding in March of 1956. Extra decals are also available for just \$4.00 per set. To place an order, please send your payment made out to CCMRC for the correct amount to:



Crescent City Model Railroad Club
601 N. Lester Ave
Metairie, LA 70003-6131



Quantity: _____ X \$30.00 each

Total for cars: \$ _____

Shipping: \$6.00

Additional Shipping per car \$2.00 ea \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Thank you for supporting the Crescent City Model Railroad Club!

NOW AVAILABLE!

Color



Pike and Dealer Ads



Pike and dealer ads are now available in color for the same price! Share your railroad or advertise your business to others while supporting the Lone Star Region.

- Do you have a herald for your railroad?
- Is there a unique feature?
- What is the name of your hotshot freight or crack passenger service?

Let everyone know about it with a color ad!

Pike ads are **\$8 per year** and dealer ads are **\$20 per year**.

Payment should be made out to:
LSR NMRA

Contact Speed Muller
lsrtreasurer@huntatrophyp.com

Ads can then be sent as a JPG file attached to an email to:
rileytriggs@gmail.com



COMING SOON!

2019 LSR CONVENTION

JUNE 27-30

FRISCO, TEXAS

<http://2019texasspecial.com/>



SPECIAL CONTEST!

**2019 THE NEW TEXAS SPECIAL
LSR CONVENTION, FRISCO, TX
JUNE 27-29, 2019**

BACK FROM THE DEAD! THE SECOND LIFE OF A CABOOSE!

Here are the rules: Start with any caboose; plastic, wood, metal; ready-to-run, shake-the-box, craftsman kit, scratchbuilt; any prototype you like. Only limitation – it must have once existed **AS A CABOOSE!**

Now build it into anything you want – other than a caboose! This is the ultimate kitbash. You may add other materials as required, but it must be obvious that your entry once was a caboose. Example – building a shed from stripwood and claiming the boards came from a caboose will NOT be accepted.

First, Second and Third Place plaques will be presented in this special category.

If you wish, you may also enter your model in any other category for which it qualifies – EXCEPT CABOOSES!



Director Reports



Cowcatcher Division 1

by Mike Mackey, MMR

director@cowcatcherdivision.org

cowcatcherdivision.com



Division 1 continues to gain momentum within its ranks. Since May of 2017 until May 2019, Division 1 has maintained a 96% retention rate with membership dropping by 6 members from either relocation or death. We have maintained this membership level without even having a train show, or any other recruiting event, hosted within our divisional boundaries.

The first six months of 2019 has shown meeting attendance and participation set new division records. March's attendance broke the 50 mark and June broke 60. More individuals have begun participating in the Achievement Program with 5 individuals on the cusp of achieving their MMR designation.

Division 1 also accomplished another goal that we had set as a division. Currently we have a leadership team of made of 10 positions (Director, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Manager, Program Manager, Operations Manager, AP Manager, Contest Advisor, North Texas Council Rep, Newsletter Editor and Webmaster).

Earlier this year we now have a backup person helping in each of these roles within the division. We have a fantastic team in this division and their hard work is a shining example of what can be achieved by a committed group of individuals.



Bayou Division 2

by Ken Mason

series9parts@cox.net

504-722-6610

Activities in the Bayou Division continued with National Train Day open houses hosted by the Crescent City Model Railroad Club in Metairie, The Mid-South Model Railroad Club in Baton Rouge and the Greater Baton Rouge Model Railroaders in the Jackson, Louisiana area. More open house events are planned for the 2019 Holiday season.

Division 2's Bayou Rail Operations weekend received a number of positive comments and a few suggestions from long time operators to help make it better. I will definitely take those comments and suggestions and do my best to improve on the Ops weekend next time. Thank you to those that took the time and expense to travel for what was a fun weekend of operations, good friends, new friends and some REALLY good food.

The Mid-South Club and the CCMRC continue to make revisions and updates and improvements to their layouts. These improvements should make the layouts better and add more variety for operations in the future.

Blaine Deroche of the Greater Baton Rouge Model Railroaders is planning another Train Day at the Lutchter Library for June 29, 2019. I have also been in discussion with the Jefferson Parish East Bank Regional Library to perhaps host an educational library train day at that facility in Metairie sometime next spring. More details will follow as they develop.

That's all for now from Division 2. Looking forward to the Convention in Frisco in June.



North East Texas Division 3

by Donna Orr

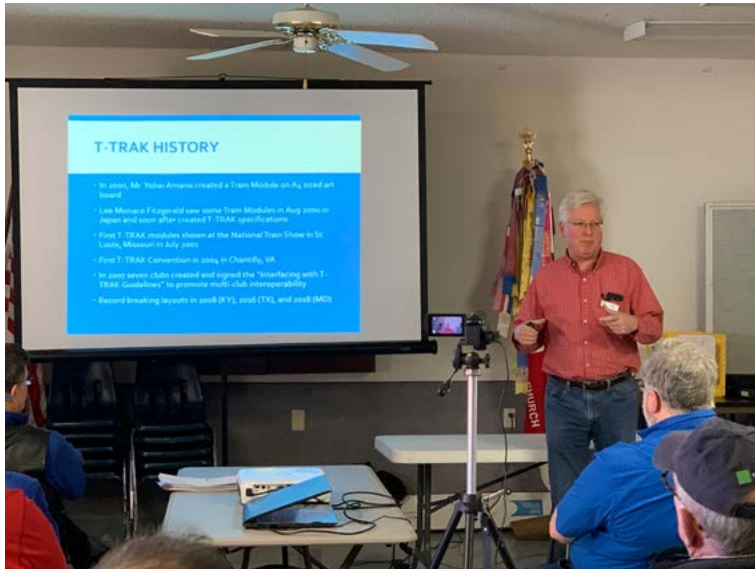
donnalorrtx@gmail.com

972-342-8598



Our meetings are most interesting and entertaining. In March we had Vic McTee present a clinic on T Trak, a Modular system for all scales. In Vic's presentation was a overview of the history, modules description , and the benefits of the T-Trak modular system.

April was also another interesting clinic, One of our teenager members, James Knabb, presented "3D design" Not 3D printing, but creating a 3D design/simulation of a building that you would want to build and add to your layout.



Vic McTee



3D design and simulation



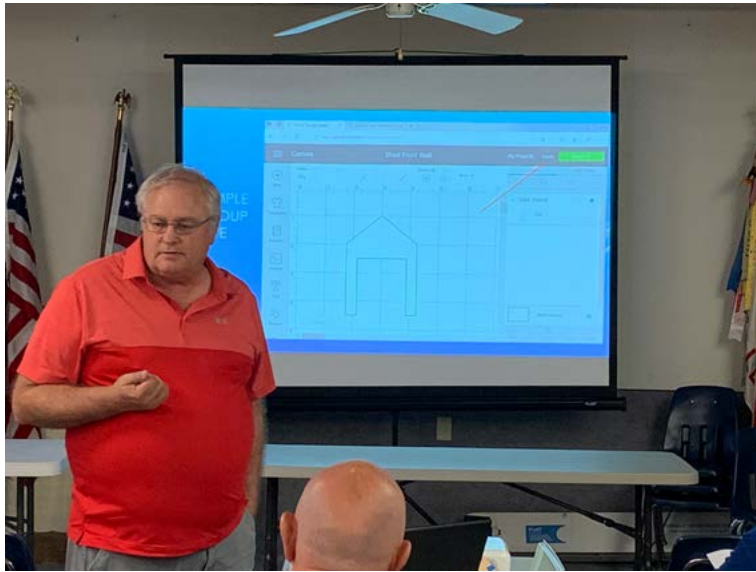
T Trak presentation



3D design and simulation

And then in May, Craig Tribuzi presented scratch building a structure with a cricut machine, which is basically a poor man's laser cutter without the laser. Craig demonstrated how this inexpensive tool can help cut all kinds of flat material to make structures.

We continue with our Mentoring/membership programs, headed up by Dennis Rice (mentor@TrinityRiver-Division.org), and adding to our DVD library, headed up by Robert Secrest (robert_secrest@hotmail.com)



Craig Tribuzi



Mentoring and membership



Cricut presentation



Mentoring and membership

Our primary focus beside the meetings has been to work on having a great convention. The convention committee has great clinics, layouts to see, operating sessions and getting to see the BIGBOY through our Museum of American Railroads, and have anyone that is interested to get up in the

BIGBOY and take pictures. and also with the Meteor. So this should be a great convention. We had an original limit of 150, but after an overwhelming number registering we made special arrangements with the hotel to be able to accommodate all those that registered.





CenTex Division 4

by Bob Thiele

director@centexnmra.org

CenTexNMRA.org

With the start of 2019 the division has been active and coming up with new ideas for the membership. In January at the division meeting Jerry Wilson MMR, conducted the second part of tree making clinic. Both clinics were make and take with all attendees participating. The feedback on the two-part clinic was excellent and group participation is an item that the members enjoy. I will endeavor to sponsor more clinics which involve the membership participation during the meetings. Afterwards, two members opened their layouts for members to view and enjoy.

The March division meeting Russell DaMetz gave an interesting and informative clinic on the Santa Fe Sulphur trains in Texas. He explained the history, operations and



The sulphur trains on the ATSF started around 1969 and ran between Rustler Springs in west Texas and Galveston.

equipment that was involved in the operation. He also presented an example in HO scale of the tank cars used and the motive power employed to transport the material. The layout tour was sponsored by a member whose layout was being seen by the membership for the first time. His craftsmanship was so good that visitors suggested that he should think about working on the Achievement program. Also during this period, division members have sponsored three operating sessions.

The May Division meeting will be held May 11th at the N.W. Austin Rec Center. The Clinic will be preparing and installing Walthers switches. A layout tour will follow after the meeting.



These trains began in November 1969 handling liquid sulfur for Duval Corporation from Rustler Springs, NM to Galveston. To help these trains across the roller coaster terrain, the Santa Fe added radio controlled helpers.



Texas Brick Railroad (photo: Riley Triggs)



Texas Brick Railroad (photo: Riley Triggs)



Division 5

by Dave Lamberts

DavidWL1944@aol.com

806.792.7244

No report.

The 2019 Austin Area Train Show held in Taylor, Texas was a great success and exceeding all expectations. The show is sponsored by the Austin Model Railroaders Society (AMRS) which consist of members from the division. The attendance was up by 36%, with this year having a large number of families attending.

Five layouts with different gauges where on display and a favorite with the young children was the Lego train layout. Vendors filled the floor of the Expo Center and we had numerous positive comments about the show's presentation. Plans are already being made to increase the quality of the show.



Engines 2841 and 2785 are in the siding at Nolanville with the West Local (train symbol 2711) on October 28, 1977.



Austin Model Railway Society (photo: Riley Triggs)



Division 6

by Don Winn

donnswinn@gmail.com

940.391.0950

We opened the year with another hands-on clinic, making flat car loads. This technique uses blister packaging that you normally throw away. Gluing tissues over the top takes on the appearance of a tarp, which you then paint and weather. They make great loads which are unique and interesting.



Blister pack loads



In February, we supported the SAMRA Train Show with an NMRA table. It was a great opportunity to talk with existing members and other interested railroaders. We also signed up 2 new members there.



Blister pack loads



SAMRA show membership table

In March, we had an NMRA member visiting from San Diego. Rodger Gredvig, MMR, was in San Antonio visiting family and wanted to get out and see some home layouts in the area. Thanks goes out to Frolin Marek for organizing a tour of 6 layouts, along with thanks to the layout owners who graciously opened their homes for the special tour.



Layout tour



Here's a good tip for everyone. Rodger had found my contact information on the NMRA website and emailed me to start the discussions for his visit. Likewise, if you are planning a trip, contact the local division director and find out what you might be able to view in the area.

March was also the next meeting of the South Texas Railroad Socials (<http://www.southtexasrr.com>). In addition to the regular meeting features, we had a clinic from MMR Al Boos on building white metal vehicles. Our second clinic

was presented by myself, discussing where to find historical information to add accurate detail to your layout. We also announced our Youth Award member for the division, Michael Ruffalo.

If you have any questions or suggestions on what activities we should be doing, please contact me at donswinn@gmail.com or (940) 391-0950.





Division 7

by Don Kimmell

elf4kcs@mac.com

318.798.7718

No report.



Texas Gulf Division 8

by Jim Lemond

jimlem@verzion.net

Greater Houston Train Show

The Greater Houston Train Show was held on February 16, 2019, in Stafford, Texas. This annual train show is sponsored and produced by the San Jacinto Model Railroad Club of Houston. The show saw growth in attendance and participation in the model building contest. Attendance for the one-day show approached 1200 paid attendees. The Show's contest room participation is calculated to be an increase of 50% over previous years.

Membership Chairman

Division 8 is proud to announce the selection of Divina Goto-Hogno as the membership chairperson for the Division. Divina and her husband, Geoffrey, are members of the NMRA, LSR and the San Jacinto Model Railroad Club. Divina has setup a Facebook page for the Division and is contacting former Division members to obtain their renewal of membership.

Division 8 Clinics

Monthly model railroad clinics began this year in March of this year. San Jacinto Model Railroad Club member, Bob Sabol, presented a clinic on how to get started building that long desired layout. In April, LSR President Chuck Lind, MMR and Loren Neufeld, MMR, presented a clinic on "Making a Scene" and with Ray Byers' help walked the attendees through the paperwork process for NMRA Achievement Awards and contest documentation. The May clinic was presented by Gene Mangum, San Jacinto Model Railroad Club member. Future clinics for 2019, will include programs featuring DCC decoder installs, programming sound decoders, using JMRI, an introduction to live steam model railroading and three "Make and Take" presentations.

Upcoming Events in Division 8

September 21, 2019 – The Division 8 annual meeting/picnic and officer election at Zube Park.

November/December 2019 – The Houston Area Layout Tour and Open House each weekend celebrating the NMRA Model Train Month.

February 13, 14 & 15, 2020 – Lone Star Region Convention held in conjunction with Greater Houston Area Train Show at the Stafford Centre in Stafford, Texas.



At-Large

by Marc LaChey

bu1977@att.net

214-507-7779

As a Director-at-Large, I have the luxury of not being confined to updating the region on the activities of a specific Division. So, for this report, I want to share with you the benefits of attending a national or specialty model railroad gathering in another part of the United States. An example might be the NMRA 2019 National Convention to be held in Salt Lake City later this summer. Or consider the 2019 National Narrow Gauge Convention to be held out in Sacramento, CA in early September. Or attend Jeff Palmer's favorite, the Fine Scale Modelers Expo. Regardless of which event you might choose to attend, I can guarantee you that you will have fun, meet friends, learn something and see some outstanding modeling.

This past April, I attended the 2019 Sn3 Symposium in Seattle. The event was co-sponsored by the 4th Division of the Pacific Northwest Region of the NMRA. I traveled to Seattle with my friend, Bob Lydecker, where we met up with Steve Amitrano of San Antonio and John Rohmberger of Flower Mound. Our first activity was an operating session on Bruce Hanley's beautiful Sn3 layout. We had a ball.

Then we got to visit Russ Segner's Coal Creek Lumber Company, Dave Woodrell's RGS Northern District, Bill Busacca's RGS, and Dale Kreutzer's, RGS 2nd Division layout. All three were featured in recent issues of the Narrow-Gauge Gazette.

Then we were able to hear clinics by Steve Amitrano on weathering ready to run freight cars, a clinic discussing the latest "power on board" technology for model railroading and a clinic by Keith Hayes on 3D printing, among others. Where can you have that much fun?

So my point is, take a trip. Go to other parts of the country. See new layouts and hear folks that you've not heard before. And if you are lucky, you might even stumble across one of your favorite engines stuffed and mounted and ready for photographs!



John Romberger, Steve Amitrano, Marc LaChey, Bob Lydecker in front of Simpson Logging Company 3 Truck Shay #7, Shelton, Washington.

Nominations Report



by Blake Bogs
superchief1520@gmail.com

Howdy y'all,

First, I want to say congratulations to the candidates that won in the last LSR election including:

President: Chuck Lind
Treasure: Gert Muller
Division 1 Director: Mike Mackey
Division 3 Director : Donna Orr
Division 5 Director: David Lambert
Division 7 Director : Don Kimmel

School has winding down and graduation has passed. My official last day at Sam Houston for my Bachelor's degree was May 11th. I officially walked the stage that day. It's hard to believe that 6 years is over in a snap.

During the past 6 years, our hobby has changed considerably. The LSR board of directors has seen a lot of different people finish their terms and move on to different positions, manufacturers and hobby shops that have been in business for over 40 years have closed or sold their business, and we've lost some of the best modelers and friends. In my case, in the last 6 years I changed from HO to O and tore out my layout. In addition to that, Petticoat has grown from just a few people meeting each month to an average of 50+ each month. In fact, in April we hit a new record of 65 people!!!! This is up from 10-15 in 2013. I mention this too much because I am still shocked that the club is still here. We almost lost the group in 2013 and 2014. Now 6 years later, our group is the best it has ever been.

During the last few months at Petticoat, we've seen several different clinics. In February we saw Mr. Dave George and John Buckley present the The Golden ~ Blackhawk &

Central City. In March we saw Jason Rose do a clinic on The Wobbly.

In April Eddie Carroll presented a clinic on his layout, the The Glenbrook Valley Railroad, and finally in May I did a clinic on the Golden Spike -150 Years and Counting. We always invite y'all to come out and join us. If you are ever in our area, we meet at Valley Ranch BBQ first Friday of the month at 6:00 PM, with our clinic occurring at 7:00 PM.

If you are interested in the Golden Spike clinic or the sound decoder clinic, I will be presenting them several times over the summer. I will be presenting the sound clinic at All Points North on May 18, the LSR convention, and Division 8's meeting in July. I will only be presenting the Golden Spike clinic at Petticoat Junction May 3 and at the LSR convention. On another note, Megan and I volunteered at the Tomball Depot Caboose in March during the annual Germanfest weekend. We estimated seeing 300-400 people across both days. It always amazes me how one train set can light up a face or bring back memories of someone's youth.

Finally, start considering running for office! The positions that are up for election are: Vice President, Secretary, All 3 Director at Large Positions, Division 2 Director, Division 4 Director, Division 6 Director, and Division 8 Director. The nomination period is October 1, 2019 through December 1, 2019. Don't miss out! If you have any questions, I'm always available! Email me at: superchief1520@gmail.com

Off to work on some contest models to get ready for June. See y'all at the LSR Convention. Keep them trains coming.

Convention Report



by Marc LaChey
bu1977@att.net
214-507-7779

First, thanks to Divisions 3 and Division 1 for co-hosting the 2019 LSR Convention. Those dates are June 27-30. Second, thanks to Division 8 and the San Jacinto Model Railroad Club for hosting the 2020 convention. The 2020 event will be a part of the Greater Houston Train Show scheduled for February 15-16, 2020.

Now, the question remains, who is willing to host the 68th Lone Star Region Convention in 2021? Will it be our friends down in Southern Louisiana, Division 2? Or perhaps another visit out west to Division 5. Or perhaps will a model railroad club down in San Antonio show interest in making some money for their treasury and offer to host the 2021 Convention. That is right, a railroad club such as the San Jac group in Houston is welcome to step up and host a convention.

And the good news is, with the LSR newsletter now digital, the convention profits that in years past was used to support the Marker Lamp, are now largely directed to the convention host. And you don't have to be an official LSR Division to offer to host a convention. Yes, there are some contractual matters that require NMRA sponsorship. But a railroad club is welcome to host a convention with the opportunity to show off the work of their local members and add some funds to their kitty. For example, Division 4 earned over \$3,500 last year for hosting the 2018 convention.

So, who out there wants to make a few bucks? Just send me an email at BU1977@att.net, and I will be happy to talk to you about hosting our regional convention.

Youth Report



Texas Gulf Division 8
by Jim Lemond
jimlem@verzion.net

Thanks to the LSR Board for the approval of these students to receive the 2019 LSR Youth Awards. All students and parents have been notified of their selection and an invitation issued for them to attend the LSR Awards Ceremony on June 29, 2019. Each student will receive a wood plaque noting their selection as an LSR Youth Awardee.

A special thank you to Donna Orr, LSR Convention Chairperson, for making special arrangements for the Awards Ceremony at this year's Convention.

Raj Subramanian – LSR Board of Directors' Youth Award, member of the All Points North Club, Conroe, Texas

James Knabb – LSR Division 3

Brooklyn Thompson - LSR Division 3

Katherine Moore - LSR Division 3

Nathan Finley – LSR Division 3

Lawson Jones - LSR Division 4

Michael Ruffalo – LSR Division 6

Kate Stewart – LSR Division 8

Jose Velasquez – LSR Division 8

Treasurer Report



by Speed Muller, Treasurer
lstrtreasurer@huntatrophys.com
 469-345-0022

In financial news: Big check from the Round Rock Convention! Expenses included 3 new projectors for clinic rooms and a record 9 new NMRA youth memberships!

There are still memberships left for veterans and active service personnel. We are still solvent with no pennies lost.

Hope to see you all at the convention in Frisco!

Speed.

Last Two Quarters of the 2018/2019 term:

Beginning Balances (2018/11/01)	
LSR Unrestricted Accounts	\$38,736.18
Beginning Total LSR Net Worth	\$38,736.18
Bob Clarke Award Fund	\$ 528.86
Division 2 and 7 Rebates in Escrow	\$ 312.50
Delattre Fund	\$ 1,200.00
Bank Saldo	\$40,777.54

Proceeds	
Round Rock Convention	\$ 2465.53
NMRA Rebate	\$ 895.00
Division #1 Youth Donation	\$ 50.00
Total Proceeds	\$ 3410.53

Disbursements	
Youth Memberships	\$ 360.00
Election Printing and Mail	\$ 103.36
NMRA Rebates to Divisions	\$ 890.00
Contest Room Expenses	\$ 360.07
Audio Visual Expenses	\$ 1505.07
Website Expenses	\$ 50.52
Memorial Donations	\$ 200.00
Total Disbursements	\$ 3469.02
Net Proceeds-Disbursements	\$ -58.49

Updates to the Restricted Funds:	
Division 2 Rebate in Escrow	\$ -255.00
Division 7 Rebate in Escrow	\$ 21.00
Delattre Fund	\$ -384.00
	-618.00

Ending Balances (2019/04/30)	
LSR Unrestricted Accounts Total	\$38,677.69
Total LSR Net Worth	\$38,677.69
Bob Clarke Award	\$ 528.86
Division 2 and 7 Rebates in Escrow	\$ 78.50
Delattre Fund	\$ 816.00
Bank Saldo	\$40,101.05

Dealer Ads

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Railroad

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lsrtreasurer@huntatrophycorp.com

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Navasota, Texas 77868
979-219-3305

Texas Western Model Railroad Club
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Laurel Valley Secondary



Pittsburgh Division Circa 1957
Brady & Jane McGuire, Sherman, Texas
903-868-2726
Southwestern Pennsylvania in Texas O Scale



GRIZZLY RIDGE R.R.



1881 **Grrr** 1889
The Bear-ly Make It Route
A 6" Division of the
Ark-La-Tex Modular Club
Tom White Haughton, La.

Cowcatcher

Magazine

March/April 2014



Getting the right shot

With digital photography, layout photos
are easier to shoot but knowing the
basics are still just as essential

SGMA-MAC makes an impression

Texas Central aims to be first high-speed rail in U.S.

All about the community
of model railroading
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bdr149@airmail.net
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"THE LINDAS"
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"THE SHINE LINE"

TAYLOR, TEXAS

HO & 1-1/2" SCALE

COWTOWN MODEL RAILROAD CLUB

CMRRC

(Formerly the LMRA Railroad Club)

Fort Worth, Texas



An HO-scale, EasyDCC operating club rising from the ashes of a club that was forced to relocate and is in the process of constructing a new layout. Visit our website for membership and contact information.

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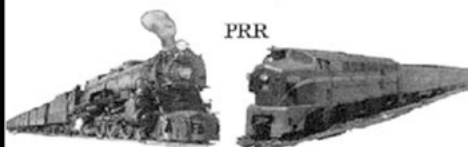


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